

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Abbes Laghrour Khenchela
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English



**The Effect of Teacher's Use of Humor on EFL Learners'
Information Retention: The Case Study of Fourth Year Pupils
at Bellafdhal Bayazid & Nouioui Touhami Middle Schools**

**Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfillment for the
Requirements of the Degree of Master in Culture and Language Studies**

Candidates:

Douniazad SLIMANI

Imen ZOGHLAMI

Supervisor:

Mr. Abdelghafour BEDDIAF

Board of Examiners:

Chairperson:

Ms. Wafa AIDOU

University of Khenchela

Supervisor:

Mr. Abdelghafour BEDDIAF

University of Khenchela

Examiner:

Ms. Amira BEGHIANI

University of Khenchela

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EPIGRAPH

“I’ve come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.”

Ginott 1993(As cited in Dornbush, and Pruitt, 1995, p.33)

Dedication

To my dear mother, the sun of my life, my greatest motivator during this journey; who was praying days and nights to see her daughter in such level. Without her love and caring, I would not be able to survive.

To my dear father who pouched me along the way. Thank you for your everlasting love and trust.

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To my beloved brother Abderahim for being always there when need be.

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To my dearest friend Djihan whose words of encouragement and support ring in my ears. Thank you for being there for me; you have been my best cheerleader.

To all the long list of my friends, so many people whom I thank from the bottom of my heart. Their names are too numerous to mention, Thank you all for helping me to prove my potential.

ZOGLAMI Imen

Dedication

In the name of Allah, the most merciful, the most compassionate

All the Praise is due to Allah alone, the Sustainers of all the worlds

My deep love and profound affection go to my dear beloved mother **Tita** to whom I owe a great debt. Her support, encouragement, and constant love have sustained me throughout my life. Thank you for always being there, for never giving up on me, for showing me your care. I am me because of you

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Who always lend a helping hand and to whom I wish successful lives filled of joy, love and prosperity.

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To all who love Slimani Douniazad

SLIMANI Douniazad

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims at investigating the status of humor in the Algerian program of teaching English in the middle school and emphasizes the importance of humor in the language teaching/learning processes. First, it examines the teacher's views and awareness regarding the significance of humor integration as an instructional strategy in the ELT process, however, research on the reasons for non-use of humor in academic contexts has joined. Second, it examines the learner's attitude towards humor as a teaching strategy and how it can influence EFL learners' information retention. In order to obtain a deeper understanding about the topic a concurrent mixed methods design was used .The researchers utilized the three data collection methods, four teacher interviews , seventy pupil questionnaires , and classroom observation. Findings indicated that the majority of the teachers considered that the lesson was effective when they embodied humor based on pupils' laughter, attention and engagement in terms of pupils getting the key points of the lesson easier. A great majority of the students (85%) strongly agreed that humor helped them retain information easily. Overall, the findings revealed that the two hypotheses are confirmed; the effective use of humor in classroom increases and sustains EFL pupils' information retention and leads to a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. Teachers must be careful not to use inappropriate humor that could be offensive or at the expense of the learner because it sometimes leads to discipline problems and this requires knowledge of what, when, and how to use it. Accordingly, this work ends with some suggestions and recommendations that are likely to improve the learning environment and the instruction in the Algerian Middle School.

Key Words: English, Humor, Information retention, Instructional strategy, Middle school

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ELT	English Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FL	Foreign Language Learners
L2	Second language
MS	Middle School

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ملخص

General Introduction

General Introduction

I. Introduction

Positive learning environment has always been an important factor in foreign language learning. In fact developing an engaging and positive learning context for EFL learners is one of the most creative aspects of teaching. Therefore scholars, practitioners and specialists have begun to search for suitable methods and techniques that create a supportive learning context which promote the teaching learning process. In addition, positive teacher–learner relationships have the potential of creating an environment conducive to learning, and will determine whether or not a learner can benefit from the teaching-learning situation.

It is argued by many scholars such as Morrison, Harmer, Martin, and Cornett and so many others that humor can be an effective way to engage students and activate learning. They also have tendered that one joke, funny pun or riddle can save the classroom and shift students from passive to active learners. Furthermore, instructional humor can facilitate the learners' engagement, grabs their attention, and creates a relaxing classroom atmosphere, thus it can positively affect the EFL learners' information retention. Consequently, because of its ubiquity in communication and teaching, it is likely to be instinctive for many teachers to use it in the classroom.

I.2.Statement of the Problem

Middle school pupils are entirely influenced by classroom setting, course content, and the way it is presented. They also should be learning in an atmosphere where they feel free to express themselves and where the teacher's sense of immediacy is highly increased. This means that the more inappropriate learning conditions are the more unexciting the lesson will be. Hence, teachers can strive to develop prosperous and suitable teaching strategies and a learning atmosphere that is compatible with humor, they also should be aware of how to harmonize pupils with EFL leaning. However, in the Algerian reality, to develop a strong sense of professionalism, a teacher must be serious and rigid. Learners are subjected to be disciplined if they happen to be humorous. So far, the idea of being humorous and friendly seems to be unreachable and this is possibly due to the fact of the limited number of studies on humor in language teaching and learning. The present study is a suggestion of using humor as a pedagogical strategy in the classroom. Moreover, using humor and knowing their influences on learner's information retention is a catalyst subject for the present research and the researchers themselves as our

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ultimate objective as future teachers is to make our classrooms alive and free of boredom because teaching is psychological rather than pedagogical.

I.3 Research Questions

This study specifically addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the effects of teachers 'use of humor on EFL learners information retention?
2. How do English teachers and EFL learners perceive the use of humor in the classroom context?

I.4. Hypotheses

In this investigation the researchers put forward the following hypotheses:

- The use of humor in EFL classroom would increase and sustain EFL learner's information retention.
- If teachers utilize humor in class, their teaching will be more conducive to optimal learning.

II. Background of the study

Humor is a powerful tool needed by teachers to create multi-harmony relationships (teacher- students' relationship). However many teachers fail to manage their classes because they are not knowledgeable about their learners. Teachers' mood is one of the major factors that impacts learners' attitudes toward learning. This means that humorous elements tend to be more comprehensive and make learners remember and code information easier during the teaching learning process.

As the researchers acknowledge the difficulty in defining terms that describe a subjective phenomenon; several key terms such as humor and information retention are explained and contextualized within the field of education. Hence, humor can be defined as a literary tool that makes audiences laugh, or that intends to induce amusement or laughter. It can reduce a person's boredom, break the monotony, anxiety and can increase motivation; also it makes the audience's nerves relax. The word humor derived from the Latin word "umor" , which refers to the four fluids 'Liquid', 'fluid', or 'moist'(Cornett, 1986). Furthermore, the philosophical study of humor has been focused on the development of a satisfactory definition of humor, which until recently has been treated as roughly co-extensive with laughter. According to the standard analysis,

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humor theories can be classified into three neatly identifiable groups: superiority, incongruity, and relief theories. Bardon says “*The superiority theory is the theory that the humor we find in comedy and in life is based on ridicule, wherein we regard the object of amusement as inferior and/or ourselves as superior*” (2005, p.2; as cited in Lintott, 2016, p.348). This theory is standardly attributed to the ancient scholars Plato, Aristotle, and Hobbes; they argued that we laugh at someone else’s inferiority. As for the incongruity theory it concentrates on cognition that it is the perception of something incongruous; something that violates our mental patterns and expectations. This theory was taken by James Beattie, Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Søren Kierkegaard during the 18th century and many later philosophers and psychologists. It is now the dominant theory of humor in philosophy and psychology. The relief theory suggests that laughter relieves the nervous feeling in us. Monro (1988) highlights that relief is the core of humor. People laugh as strain removed. He defines humor as “*the temporary way adopted to get released from the restraint of the conventional social requirements*” (p. 353-354). However these theories of humor provide a useful understanding of humor and have relevance for the teaching and learning context. Additionally, humor varies greatly from one person to another but the psychologist Rod Martin boiled it down to four styles; they include affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self defeating humor (See Figure I.6).

Pedagogically speaking, humorous material can add variety to the class, providing a change of pace, and can contribute to reducing tension that many learners feel during the learning process. Jokes, riddles, and puns are forms of humor that a teacher may integrate in the classroom to help learners absorb the lesson effortlessly. In other words, “*The job of the teacher is to get students laughing, and when their mouths are open, to give them something on which to chew*” (Tom Davis , 1997; as cited in Chiasson, 2002, para. 16).

However, in the other hand, “*retention is the fact of keeping something in one's memory*” (Oxford Student’s dictionary, p. 608). Hence retention of learned information can be defined as having the information stored in long-term memory in such a way that it can be readily retrieved. (Bennett and Rebello, 2012).Consequently, the study of retention clearly overlaps with the study of memory, but differs in that for information to be viewed as retained. Learners must be able to recall it when appropriate in response to prompts such as those usually found in schools and not merely in response to experiential cues, such as the smell of freshly baked bread. The study of retention is among the oldest areas of formal study in the science of learning, dating back to

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Ebbinghaus's study of spacing effects in the 1880s .As Lieberman argued that “*learning is dependent on memory processes because previously stored knowledge functions as a framework in which newly learned information can be linked*” (as cited in Memory and Retention in Learning , 2012, para. 2).

II. Aims and objectives

The major purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes and perceptions of 4MS teachers of English and their pupils at Bellafdhah Bayazid and Nouioui Touhami middle schools towards the use of humor as a teaching strategy and its potential impact on EFL learners' information retention. In other words, what is the perceived effect of humor on the educational contexts and why those teachers and pupils perceive it the way they do, with the purpose to make recommendations to promote humor as an instructional strategy. The investigation of these perceptions and attitudes will hopefully expand our insight into this issue.

III. Research Methodology

This section will discuss the following: Research design, Data Collection Instruments, population and sampling.

III.1. Research design

This is a mixed method approach; the qualitative and quantitative approaches have been utilized. Mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analyzing and integrating quantitative (e.g., experiments, surveys) and qualitative (e.g., focus groups, interviews) research. Hence, the purpose was to compare results in order to draw a more detailed picture, making this research format one of the concurrent triangulation design (Creswell et al., 2003; as cited in Punch, 2009). This is the most common type of mixed methods research design, enabling the researcher to compare the findings from two or more methods and analyze the similarities or discrepancies.

III.2. Data Collection Instruments

In this work, the researcher uses the three main research tools: questionnaire, interview and observation (triangulation data collection method) to investigate the positive and negative effects of using humor in classroom setting and to increase credibility and validity of the research.

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III.3. Sampling and Population

This study will be conducted at Bellafdhah Ba Yazid and Nouioui Touhami middle schools, Khenchela. The population selected for this study embodied by 4MS teachers of English and their pupils. Middle school pupils were the researchers' major issue, as they are primarily adolescents and they need to be treated in more sensitively by their teachers who should take care of their feeling and emotions.

IV. The Structure of the Study

The present research is divided into four main chapters. It starts with a general introduction that deals with the statement of the problem and the aim of the study. It includes also the hypotheses and the research question. After this introduction, several definitions are given.

Chapter1: discusses the most important theories about humor (Independent variable). This chapter lists the most important aspects of humor; it includes the definition, the main theories of humor as well as the use of humor as a pedagogical strategy (Humor in education).

Chapter2: focuses on the second variable which is information retention. In this chapter, researchers define information retention, learning, types of learning, memory and its types, humor and information retention, and discuss the positive and negative effects of humor on EFL learner's information retention.

Chapter3: This chapter is concerned with the research design and methodology. The researchers started with research approach that had been used, the definition, and the significance; Moreover, the description of our sample and population, and the data collection instruments.

Chapter4: Analysis and discussion of data; Respondents, collected data from observation, interviews and questionnaires. The main results of data analysis are also described in this chapter. This includes results based on the triangulation method.

Eventually, the study arrives at a general conclusion through which the researchers mention some recommendations for future research. Also it shows the limitations of the study; certain difficulties encountered during the research.

Chapter one:
Contextualizing Humor

Chapter One: Contextualizing Humor

I.1.Introduction

To provide the study with a sound theoretical foundation, a review of existing research was carried out. This chapter reviews the literature related to the field of humor and learning. Although the literature covers a wide variety of such theories, this review focuses on one major theme, our independent variable “Humor”, which emerges repeatedly throughout the literature reviewed. To do this, the researchers begin this chapter by drawing different perspectives to define the word humor as it is used in this study. Following this, a historical overview of the term (humor) and scholars’ standpoints on it have been provided. Then, the researchers present the three theories of humor, the superiority, incongruity and relief theories to explain how humor is interpreted and functions in society. An attempt to pinpoint the different types and styles of humor and its relation to the field of education is also considered in this section.

I.2 Origins of humor

There exists ample evidence in the literature that seems to support the belief that no one knows exactly when the first human smiled. What is documented in history is the origin of the word humor which is believed to have grown from the Latin word for “liquid” or “fluid.” (Mayer, 2019). In medical language, *humores* was a term denoting body fluids primarily; blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile; a balance of which was thought to determine one’s health. A person with a good balance, i.e. in good health, was said to be in good humor. “*It entered as humor into Middle English via French (responsible for the ou)*” (Ruch, 2007, p.7). Then, during the Renaissance period humor became a term for one’s insanity. It was not until the 18th century that there was a shift in the meaning of humor to refer to normal human behavior (Morrison, 2008) and, later, to the modern sense of ‘a personality characteristic’ (Billig, 2005, p.12). In a modern sense, a humorist is a person who was said to possess an excess of one of the fluids.

I.3 Definitions of humor

There are many definitions of the word "humor", the common definition that most of researchers and scholars agree upon is that humor is something used to make others laugh by telling jokes and funny things. This definition can be explained in

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three bullet points; first, humor is craft mastered by those who can put the smiles upon another people's face. Second, it reflects on the intimate relationship between the humorist and his target audience. Third, making other happy and amused is a key aspect in the definition of humor in itself. Hence, many elements are taken into consideration when defining the word "humor" "like the individual's ability to understand and appreciate humor and their reaction towards it.

Among researchers, however, there is a greater level of variation in the ways they define humor. Humor is "an amusing communication that produces positive emotions and cognitions in the individual or in the group" (Romero and Cruthirds, 2006, p. 59). According to Wanzer, Frymier, Wojtaszczyk and Smith (2006) humor is "anything that the teacher and/or students find funny or amusing" (p.182). This definition is in line with dictionary definitions in terms of 'funny' and 'amusing'. However, it could be difficult to detect whether something is perceived as "funny or amusing" since there is no mention of the indicators, e.g. laughter. Cook (2000) defines humor as language play, which refers to playing with both language form and meaning to create humorous effects for its recipients. These preceding definitions of humor are general and far afield from the classroom context. Another definition has been tendered by Vossler & Sheidlower (2011) who go deeper, claiming that humor at its heart, it is not the behavior of telling jokes, but it is that strategy used to create rapport between teacher and learners in a way that makes them feel closer to their instructor.

Psychologically speaking, humor is a psychological response characterized by emotion amusement, judgment that is funny. Equally important, humor is attractive, pleasurable, entertaining, develop creativity and ease criticism. According to Levine (1969) "humor is regarded as trifling, destructive and degrading force to morality, religion, and art. Seen differently, it is liberating, socially constructive, and even ennobling art" (p.1). Morrison (2008) believes that our cognitive emotional growth is mainly influenced by the use of humor in our lives. Furthermore "*From a psychological perspective, the humor process can be divided into four essential components: (1) a social context, (2) a cognitive-perceptual process, (3) an emotional response, and (4) the vocal-behavioral expression of laughter.*" (Martin, 2007, p.5). Below is an illustration of the definition of humor in relation to different subfields of psychology.



Figure I.1 *Definition of Humor in Relation with Different Subfield of Psychology* (Banat, 2018, p.8).

This lack of agreement leads to various definitions and/or implications of definitions of humor in different studies which, in turn, makes it difficult to reach a consensus or to compare humor research. Instead of trying to define humor, a number of philosophers and psychologists have turned to accounting for the theories behind it. We shall consider some of such theories in the section that follow.

1.4 Theories of Humor

Humor theories can be classified into three neatly identifiable groups: superiority theory, incongruity theory and relief theory.

I.4.2 the Superiority Theory

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The superiority theory of humor traces back to Plato and Aristotle and dominant until the 17th century in the works of such as Hobbes. They believe that our feeling of superiority over people we laugh at give us the pleasure of humor. This longest-standing theory maintains that all humor involves a feeling of superiority. Lintott (2016) states that the superiority theory is concerned with the effective response that often accompanies comic amusement. Hence, the humorous person is the powerful one and the other person is the weak, since the word superiority here refers to making fun of someone in a way that makes him feel inferior (insulting and bullying the other). Bardon says “*The superiority theory is the theory that the humor we find in comedy and in life is based on ridicule, wherein we regard the object of amusement as inferior and/or ourselves as superior*” (2005, p.2).

Within the classroom environment the teacher is the humorous person because his superior position gives him the right to make fun of the students if they made a mistake or answered in a wrong way ... etc. This act is not funny and considered as inappropriate because it affects their academic path negatively.

However, not all laughter and humor can be explained by the superiority theory. Humans may laugh out of surprise, amazement, or enjoyment (Morreall, 1997, p.25). To explain laughter and humor more thoroughly, a more recent theory came into existence: the incongruity theory.

1.4.2 The Incongruity Theory

The incongruity theory has been considered to be current dominant theory in the psychological and philosophical studies of humor (Morreall, 1997; as cited in Billing 2005). The incongruity theory was taken by James Beattie, Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer and Søren Kierkegaard during the 18th century, and many later philosophers and psychologists. It posits that “*people laugh at things that surprise them or at things that violate an accepted pattern of thinking*” (Wilkins & Eisenbraun, 2009, p. 352).

In other words, according to this theory, humor is perceived at the moment of realization of incongruity between what really happens and what is expected to happen. Berk (2005) claims that incongruity can be called ‘contrast resolution’. It is ‘the juxtaposition’ of the ‘expected’ with the ‘unexpected’. This explains why we find a clown’s face funny (since it is not an ordinary face as we know), and why we laugh on hearing the punch line of a joke or a clever one-liner.

There are conditions for the enjoyment of incongruities, though. These incongruities should come in a pleasant and enjoyable way. As an example for these conditions, if

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someone asked, “What do you call a black person that graduated from medical school?” right away, the person listening to this joke is thinking of all the possible answers to this question except the most obvious one; when the person telling the joke then shouts, “A doctor,” it leaves the person on the listening end of the joke frazzled for a moment because they were expecting something different (possibly racist) instead of the joke teller providing fun, triggered some readers to find solutions for the improbable situation it described.

Relating this theory with the classroom context, the teacher can ask students questions with funny unexpected answers and also can perform incongruous scenarios in the classroom to get their attention to the lesson or to motivate them, this way of teaching is seen as funny and interesting by the learners.

1.4.3 Relief Theory

Laughter is often described as a physical reaction to calm oneself from worries or anxious feelings (Lynch, 2002). In this theory, humor is seen as catharsis (the purification and purgation of emotions). It is the preferable strategy used to challenge pent-up emotions. The relief theory was originated by the founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud in his book *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1960), he mentions that through humor, we can trick the ‘censor’, the internal inhibitions, that handicap the achievement of our ‘natural impulses’ (as cited in Monro’s “Theories of Humor”, 1988). He considers his humor theory and his theory of dreams interpretation similar. Since Humor is exactly like dreams, it can beguile the censor, than the suppressed wishes then may come true.

The relief theory provides a different perspective of humor. For example, it explains how a situation or story with suspense at the beginning that ends in a humorous way might make people laugh (Civikly, 1986). Furthermore it explains humor and laughter as happens when people feel nervous or scared, but then experience enjoyment feelings.

In the classroom setting, to create an environment that is suitable to learning, the teacher often uses humor (especially in tense situations) to help students reduce anxiety and to create a comfortable atmosphere that facilitates interaction between them. And this can help them enjoy the lesson and feel more relaxed. For example, after a tense test the teacher may start his lesson by telling a joke that makes students laugh and feel comfortable to motivate them to participate in class.

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The most noticeable thing about these theories is that each theory has its own perspective and area of focus which means that no theory can fully explain the nature of humor and its social functions.

1.5 Types of humor

Different researchers have classified humor in a number of ways. Bryant, Comisky, and Zillmann (1979) tender that humor in lectures can be classified as jokes, riddles, puns, funny stories, and humorous comments. *“During the course of a typical day, we encounter many different forms of humor communicated by different means and different purposes”* (Martin, 2007, p.10). These are the description of common form of humor:

1.5.1 Jokes

“A joke is something, such as a funny story or trick, that is said or done in order to make people laugh” (Cambridge Online Dictionary, 4th ed). Sherzer (1985) defines a joke as *“a discourse unit consisting of two parts, the set up and the punch line”* (p.216). In the classroom setting, a joke is a kind of short humorous piece usually performed to keep the student’s attention or improving the student’s communicative skill. Therefore jokes serve a variety of positive functions on the students in class beyond making the laugh , humor brings them together and makes them respond more positively to each other , also help them to cope with stress and get their attention to the lesson . Here are some examples used by teachers in the classroom:

Example one: a math joke

The teacher: what does the 0 say to the 8?

The student: “I like your belt”

Example two: a grammar joke

"A woman, without her man, is nothing"

"A woman: without her, man is nothing"

The teacher may use this example to highlights the function of the punctuation marks.

Example three: A grammar joke

Teacher: could you tell me two pronouns?

Pupil: who, me?

Teacher: Well done!

Some jokes are not appropriate to the learning environment because they have negative effects on the students such as sexual jokes ... etc

1.5.2 Puns

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“*Pun is the clever or humorous use of a word that has more than one meaning, or words that have different meaning but sound the same*” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, p.574). Puns are a special form of humor based on double meanings. In the same line of thoughts, Pollack (2011) argued that Puns are sometimes nicknamed “*the lowest form of humor*” and often greeted with groans, but in fact, the language knowledge needed to understand a pun is very sophisticated” (as cited in Lems, K. 2013, p.26). Partington (2006) describes pun by the “*creative use of language*” (p. 110). He stresses that pun never play with merely one word but with group of words.

English puns generally fall into four categories, three of which are well established and are based on homophones, polysemous words, and close-sounding words (Lems 2011). The fourth newer category of puns is the texting puns which is now emerging through texting and instant messaging and is based on the use of alphabetic, numeric, or simplified spelling. Thus, the table below summarizes all the four categories and illustrates each kind with an example:

Table I.1

Examples of Four Pun Categories (Lems, 2013, p29)

Four categories of puns
<i>Sound-alike puns :</i>
Teacher: Tell me something that conducts electricity. Student: Why, er... Teacher: Yes, wire! Now name a unit of electrical power. Student: A what? Teacher: Yes, a watt! Very good
2. Two peanuts were walking down the street, and one was a salted (assaulted).
3. My three-year-old daughter is resisting a rest (arrest)!
4. I practice my handwriting because it’s the write (right) thing to do
<i>Lookalike Puns :</i>
Teacher: Selma, what’s the highest form of animal life? Selma: A giraffe?
Barry: What travels faster, hot or cold? Mary: Hot. You can always catch cold.
Question: How do you stop a charging bull?

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Answer: Take away its credit card.
Question: What did the road say to the bridge? Answer: You make me cross
<i>Close-sounding Puns:</i>
The barber went to the bank and opened a shaving account.
Question: How did you keep your dog out of the street? Answer: I took her to the Barking Lot.
A skunk fell in a river and stank to the bottom.
Sign on a bake shop: “We bake to differ.”
<i>Texting Puns</i>
GINVU!
R U L8?
Hotel sign : Gr8 r8s
Why is 10 scared? Because 7 8 9

Note: Translation of table 1 (Texting Puns):

1. Gee, I envy you.
2. Are you late?
3. Great Rates
4. Because 7 ate 9

In short, making puns during the learning program introduces special obstacles but it has many recompenses. However, to make sure that students understand any of these puns, they must first recognize the meaning of the original word or phrase. Then, they must recognize and be able to access a second meaning for one of the words. If it is a close-sounding pun, students must be able to figure out what the other word sounds like, which is a challenging task in one’s second language. Lastly, they need to pull together the two possible meanings of the word and compare them in the context of the phrase or sentence. When all of those steps are complete, there is a moment where the two meanings come together, and it’s time to laugh. Furthermore, If a teacher wants to incorporate puns during the learning process, he first might want to practice classifying the four categories of puns masterfully (Lems,2013)

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1.5.3 Riddles

According to Collins dictionary “A riddle is a puzzle or joke in which you ask a question that seems to be nonsense but which has a clever or amusing answer”. Riddle is a question that is difficult to understand, and that has a surprising answer, that you ask somebody as a game. The term riddle derives from the old English word “*radels*” or “*radelse*”; it is related to Dutch “*raadsel*” and German “*ratsel*” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2008). Moreover, the main objective for utilizing riddles is to teach students how to analyze and discuss ideas (Shade, 1996). For example, imagine that you are in a boat, in the middle of the sea. Suddenly you are surrounded by hungry sharks, just waiting to feed on you. How can you put an end to this? (The answer is: stop imagining). Hence riddles are considered as a way of frosting students’ thinking. Teacher use riddles to teach vocabulary, spelling, and even phonology. The following examples highlight the use of riddles in the classroom setting:

Example one: Build on a letter to make a word:

What comes after L? Bow (elbow)

What comes after E? Z (easy)

What comes after B? 4 (before)

Example two:

Teacher: What question can you never answer “yes” to?

Student: “Are you asleep?”

Example Three:

Teacher: You answer me, although I never ask you questions. What am I?

Student: telephone

1.6 Styles of Humor

Martin et al (as cited in Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008) differentiate between the two potentially positive forms of humor, affiliative and self-enhancing, i.e. they are healthy and adaptive. The two negative forms of humor self-defeating and aggressive, i.e. they are unhealthy and determinable (Martin, 2007).

It is the use of all forms of humor; this involves telling jokes that make everyone laugh .According to Martin (2007):

Affiliative humor refers to the tendency to say funny things, to tell jokes, and to engage in spontaneous witty banter, in order to amuse others, to facilitate relationships, and to reduce

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interpersonal tensions (e.g., “I enjoy making people laugh”). This is hypothesized to be an essentially non hostile, tolerant use of humor that is affirming of self and others and presumably enhances interpersonal cohesiveness. (p.211)

Martin adds that this style of humor is healthy and adaptive. It can be used as a strategy to resolve conflicts, and allow partners to feel much closer to each other (Compel, 2008, as cited in Gournelos & Greene, 2011).

in classroom settings the teacher uses the affiliative humor in order to bring students together , and make them laugh by telling them jokes , funny stories ... etc (about everyday life , animals .. etc). And also can use it as a strategy to solve problems.

1.6.1 Self Enhancing Humor

Self- enhancing humor is just like affiliative humor, positive, healthy, and adaptive, it is related to healthy coping with stress, anxiety and tension. Hence, Martin (2007) stresses that coping with problems is the core of self- enhancing humor. Kuiper, Martin, and Olinger (1993) state that people who have a self-enhancing humor use absurdities and incongruities to deal with stressors and negative life events, for example when you are depressed, upset or facing stressors you try to think of something funny about the situation to make yourself feel better. There are some ways to reframe your stressor that are suggested by (Kerr, 2002.p210):

1. Take five minutes to write down “what’s working,” “what’s positive” and “what’s remotely funny” about an issue causing you stress.
2. Imagine the worst-case scenario. Exaggerate and have fun with the wildest possibilities to gain a more balanced view of a problem.
3. Imagine a positive reference point for you- last summer at the cabin, last weekend at the ski hill—anything that allows your mind to travel to a positive place
4. Create your own silly version of a “Top-10 Ways to Deal with Stress” list and then read it to yourself the next time you’re feeling stressed out.
5. Have a slogan or goofy song to recall every time you face a stressful situation
6. Reframe the event by looking at it through the eyes of your favorite comedian or superhero
7. Ask yourself . . . what’s the one thing from this mess that I can take away, learn from or laugh at?
8. Imagine a wacky newspaper headline describing the event
9. Complete the following sentence, “It could be worse . . . “
10. Switch sides in a debate and argue to ridiculous extremes from the other side.
11. Count to 10 and imagine how funny it will seem a year from today.

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12. Visualize people you're mad at as the name you'd like to call them.
13. Come up with a funny label or code to describe your common stressors.

usually the teacher use this style to develop students relationship with each other by making them amuse and help them to reduce stress , fear and anxiety ... etc

1.6.2 Aggressive Humor

Going back to Plato, Aristotle, and Hobbes, aggressive humor crucially relates to the feeling of superiority (Morreal, 1987). If you play jokes on others to make fun, if you tease someone (put-down or insult him/her), if you ridicule somebody you don't like, and if you put down those who are inferior to you; you absolutely utilize aggressive humor. Moreover, It is, also, related to two phenomena: "*gelotophobia is the fear of being laughed at ... and katagelasticism is the joy of laughing at others*" (Ruch & Proyer, 2009, as cited in Samson & Meyer, 2010, p.218). Aggressive jokes potentially take the form of ridicule, mocking, teasing, derision, or disparagement humor (Martin, 2007). Hence aggressive humor is seen as "*the tendency to use humor for the purpose of criticizing or manipulating others*" (Beebe, 2007, p. 34). As a result, aggressive humor is a negative style of humor; it is unhealthy. It should be avoided in classroom since it dehumanizes students.

1.6.3 Self-defeating Humor

Self-defeating humor is alike the aggressive humor style. It is a negative and an unhealthy style of humor, it happens when someone put himself down. Erickson & Feldstein (1999) add that this style of humor is determinable; it is primly utilized for the purpose of making relationships with others at one's account (as cited in Martin, 2007, p. 286). Self defeating humor is defined as follow:

Self-defeating humor involves the use of excessively self-disparaging humor, attempts to amuse others by doing or saying funny things at one's own expense, and laughing along with others when being ridiculed or disparaged (e.g., "I often try to make people like or accept me more by saying something funny about my own weaknesses, blunders, or faults. (Martin, 2007, p.211)

Psychologically speaking this style is used as a defensive denial, to hide one's underlying negative feeling or to avoid attacks by making yourself a joke before others put you down.

In short, the underlying dimensions of humor and the four humor styles that emerge from their combination are depicted in the following figure:

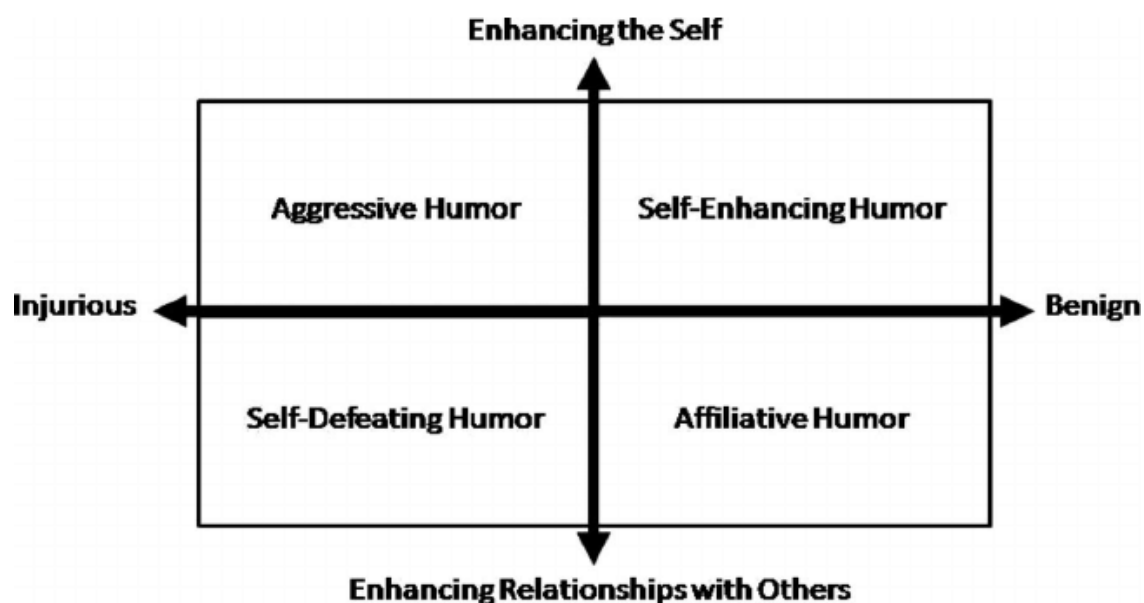


Figure I.2 *The four humor styles described by Martin et al. (2003).*

In other words, the relatively being (or adaptive) styles of humor (i.e., affiliative and self-enhancing) have been found to be associated with personality features such as high levels of extraversion, openness, and self-esteem. In contrast, the more injurious (or maladaptive) styles of humor (i.e., self-defeating and aggressive) have been found to be associated with high levels of neuroticism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism, as well as low levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness (Martin et al. 2003).

1.7 Humor in Education

Some EFL teachers may be in the opinion that it is not in place to use humor in their classrooms; they may think that their topic is too serious, or that their role as a teacher does not permit such a behavior. Combining this with the common (mis)belief that certain people are born humorous and only comedians can use humor effectively provides an explanation

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for teacher' reluctance in, even resistance to using or accepting humor in an educational setting. There are fears of: inadequacy, looking silly or unprofessional, being made fun of, loss of control, and loss of study time (Morrison, 2008). In this context, *“One of the reasons the use of humor is complicated is because of its multidimensional and multifunctional nature. For one, it is perceived highly personal, subjective and contextual; all features which make it problematic to predict the way humor will be received by the hearer.”* (Alatalo, 2016, p.68).

Despite this unfriendly view of humor, many books and articles have looked into the potential of humor in education and reported positive results. Furthermore, psychologists suggest the following functions of humor starting from humor as a therapy as it helps to relieve pain, stress and a person's sense of well being. Then, humor as sixth sense. Next, humor as a safety valve and finally humor as counseling. Humor in the classroom is like spice in the food - very necessary and important to add flavor and create interest (Bonjour, 2011). According to Bergen (1992) *“teachers who use strategies that promote the connection between humor and learning usually provide students with their best school experiences”* (p.106).

In brief, using humor in classroom has created a big clamor in the field of education, Therefore, It is clear that for language teachers to have a more established theoretical ground base to their use of humor in the classroom and to justify that use, more empirical studies into teachers' use of humor in foreign language classes are needed, thereupon, many books and articles are published yearly.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, humor is advocated as a pedagogical strategy. Many authors recommend the use of humor in the academic context. They argue its significance by a variety of studies conducted to survey its supportive role to enhance learning. Furthermore, no matter how humor has been defined and what principles humor theories are based on, but what worthwhile role it plays in the classroom context. In addition to its therapeutic function, humor has the potential to give rise to successful learners.

In order to effectively use humor in the classroom context, some rules are required to be obeyed. The appropriate and timely humor relies on certain principles a teacher need to follow , thus , it will be easy for professors to make humor an integral part of material to be learnt in order to create a positive learning environment for learners .

Chapter One: Contextualizing Humor

Chapter two:
Contextualizing Information
Retention

Chapter Two: Contextualizing Information Retention

II.1 Introduction

Our knowledge is the sum total of our experiences, which expands daily as we experience new things. This knowledge depends on our memorization of what we have learned. In everyday life, we take in new information and store it in our brain, maintaining it and recalling it depending on our needs. These capabilities of storing and reusing are known as the human memory system. Weiten (2013) argues that the study of memory clearly overlaps with the study of retention because any retained information is kept in human memory stores; therefore, without human memory processes, retention of material would not be possible. Furthermore, retention is the basic consideration that underlies all learning; therefore the importance of decreasing loss of learning is commonly recognized by teachers in the learning process.

II.2 Defining Information Retention

Information retention is about making new knowledge stick, and not only memorable but also unforgettable following certain tips and techniques. “*Retention is the fact of keeping something in one's memory*” (Oxford Student’s dictionary, p.608). Hence, retention is linked to information and the ability to recall it. Bennett and Rebello (2012) defined information retention as having the information stored in long-term memory in such a way that it can be readily retrieved.

II.3 Defining Learning

In order to discuss the role of humor in learning, it is important to specify the definition of “learning” applied in this study. Learning can be defined as “*knowledge or skill acquired by instruction or study*” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, n.d.). Furthermore, learning must be active and meaningful; hence, almost all the actions we take are the result of past learning and our previous experience. According to Piaget’s Learning Theory (2018), learning is a process that only makes sense in situations of change. Therefore, learning partly knows how to adapt to these changes.

II.4 Types of Learning

Different researchers have classified learning strategies in a number of ways. Hence, there are two types of learning in the classroom, Active Learning and Passive Learning.

II.4.1 Active Learning

Active learning is a broadly inclusive term, used to describe several models of instruction that hold learners responsible for their own learning. According to Bonwell and Eison (1991) active learning describes a process in which students engage in or doing things and thinking about what they are doing in the classroom . Active learning refers to techniques

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that transition students from listening to higher order thinking both inside and outside the classroom (Massey, Brown, & Johnston, 2005). These techniques require students to personalize the retained information to what they already know (Diamond, Koering, & Zafar, 2008). Active learning is superior to passive learning, inducing higher order thinking, as well as greater emotional involvement (Hamer, 2000).

II.4.2 Passive Learning

Unlike active learning which makes the student a partner in the learning process, passive learning is based on the implicit assumption that lecturing equals learning (Hamer, 2000). According to Benjamin (1991) lecturing only requires students to listen and record, it doesn't necessarily engage them in higher level thinking. In another meaning, it might be useful for the teacher to use the passive learning approach to convey a large amount of information, but as the classroom time increases, the effectiveness of the lecture decreases; therefore, students lose interest, motivation, and responsiveness (Hammer 2000). So the information that taught passively is not well retained. Below is an illustration of the "Learning Triangle" or "The Cone of Experience" developed by Edgar Dale that highlights the difference between passive and active learning.



Figure II.1 Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience. Adapted from E. Dale, Audiovisual Methods in Teaching, 1969, p.108, NY: Dryden Press.

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Dale (1940) theorizes that learners retain more information by what they do as opposed to what is heard, read or observed. As Confucius says “*I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand*” (551 BC to 479 BC). The cone of experience is often misinterpreted as the pyramid shape that would insinuate some options are better than others. The key to the cone is that teachers should work in all aspects in order to access the student’s full capabilities. Dale (1946) believes that a healthy delicate balance between passive and active learning in the classroom will lead the students to understand and remember more than when they are in a solely active or passive learning class.

II.5 Defining Memory

McLeod (2013) argues that memory is the term given to the structures and processes involved in the storage and subsequent retrieval of information. In other words memory is the ability to remember things and the brain’s power to recall past experiences or information. Equally important, Zimmermann (2014) considers that recalling events, facts or processes, a person has to commit them to memory. The process of forming a memory involves encoding, storing, retaining and subsequently recalling information and past experiences. So the information is encoded, stored and retrieved in the brain when trying to recall it.

II.6 Types of Memory

Shiffrin and Shiffrin (1968) in their model (The Atkinson-Shiffrin model) believe that there exist three types of human memory ; the sensory memory that lasts for one second ,the short-term memory (the working memory) that lasts for one minute, and the long term memory (the life-time memory). The sensory information enters the memory through the sensory memory and remains in the working memory for a while. Finally, the data proceed to the long-term memory and are stored indefinitely. Different types of memory each have their own particular mode of operation, but they all cooperate in the process of memorization and can be seen as three necessary steps in forming a lasting memory.

II.6.1 Sensory Memory

Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968) argue that sensory memory associates with energy transduction. Sensory receptor cells transduce the received stimulus from the five senses into electrical energy. This process creates a memory that lasts for about 0.5 seconds for vision and 3 seconds for hearing. Moreover in typical educational and learning situations, this is via the ears or eyes, though in some types of learning the other three senses can also play a role, such as taste if one is learning to cook, smell if one is learning about aromatics in chemistry

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or flowers in botany, and touch if one is learning a sport or a medical student is learning to palpate a patient (Pedro, Paul, and Casper, 2015).

II.6.2 Short-term Memory

While much of the information in sensory memory decays and is forgotten, some is attended to. The information that is attended is transferred to the short-term store (Baddeley, and Hitch , 1974). Short-term memory has a storage capacity of only about seven items and lasts only a few dozen seconds (Miller, 1956: as cited in Atkinson, and Shiffrin [The Atkinson-Shiffrin Model], 1968). They refer to it as a working or conscious memory which is stimulated either by external stimulus or by an internal thought process. Hence, just as sensory memory is a necessary step for short-term memory; short-term memory is a necessary step toward the next stage of retention, long-term memory.

II.6.3 Long-term Memory

Long term memory which is also referred to as preconscious and unconscious memory, is any data that is unavailable during normal consciousness. Distributed practice and elaboration are the two processes, which help to place information in the long-term memory (Atkinson, and Shiffrin, 1968). The Atkinson-Shiffrin model proclaims that Short-Term Memory could be transferred to Long-Term Memory if the information was processed and learned fast enough. This basically means, we never lose the ability to store new information regardless of how long we live. But it is far from infallible. It sometimes distorts the facts, and it tends to become less reliable as we age, in an article from The brain entitled (“Memory and Learning”,n.d, para. 10).

II.7 Humor and Information Retention

Humor can highly be beneficial in a variety of situations. *“Humor, a unique human characteristic, is critical in thought, communication and social interaction. Successful jokes, involve a cognitive juxtaposition of mental sets, followed by an affective feeling of amusement”* (Goel, and Dolan, 2001, p.237). The effective use of humor can help memory retention and to recall information, Wortley and Doston (2016), argue that *“Instructors can engage their students through many methods of integration: instructor delivery of humor, incorporation of visual humor through YouTube videos, and appropriate humor usage; thereby enabling students to absorb and retain more content focused information”* (pp. 17-18). As a further matter, Henderson (2015) asserts that humor activates the brain’s dopamine reward system stimulating goal-oriented motivation and long term memory, which means that humor, can improve retention in students of all ages. This means that using humor as

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a teaching strategy helps students to improve their information retention; it can be applied on all students with different ages. Humor activates our sense of wonder, which is where learning begins, so it seems logical that humor could enhance retention (Henderson, 2015). Humor and laughter cause people to remember and encode information better when they perceive it as humorous.

II.8 The Positive and Negative Effects of Humor on EFL Learners Information Retention

Humor is the “most powerful *“resource” to achieve lots of beneficial educational outcomes*” (Cornett, 1986; p.8). Humor is a pedagogically effective strategy that can be used to avoid the negative impact of the negative characters of teachers since “*students enjoy being entertained and amused*” (Harmer, 1998, p.1). That is to say, the happier learning students feel; the more successful they will be. Furthermore, a research has used humorous and non-humorous cartoons to more precisely evaluate the impact of humor on memory and recall. Such studies feature cartoons varying in degree of humorousness and test recall for both the cartoons themselves, as well as the cartoon captions, with generally positive results. Humorous cartoons tend to be recalled more often than non-humorous ones (Schmidt and Williams, 2001). Furthermore, Schmidt (1994) suggests that humorous elements receive increased attention and are thus better encoded in memory precisely because of their incongruity with non-humorous elements found in the same presentation. Casper (1999) stated that learning induced by humor strengthens the learning memory. Most importantly Banat (2018) suggests a number of benefits to humor if a teacher adopts entertaining styles : being humorous teacher may help you to develop your capacities , create an engaging learning environment , control the student’s behavior and encapsulate the discipline problem during the lesson, as well as you may enhance the student grade by motivating him to work hard . Moreover, using humor during the teaching learning process may come to the aid of creating the spirit of challenge between student, decreases stress and reduce anxiety and boredom, helps student to solve his daily problem and create a good relation between teacher and student, fire up the student’s brain, helps student to speak and give his/her point of view and aid to improve student physical and mental skill ...etc. Hence, humor develops the student’s physical, mental, cognitive skills, and help to deal with sociological, psychological problems. Similarly (Quina, 1989. as cited in Csikszentmihalyi & McCormack, 1995) explains:

If teachers and learners can laugh together, they can most likely work together as well. In these days of standards and high stakes accountability, if students are comfortable

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and enjoy the learning process, they are more likely to remember more of the material presented. Enthusiastic teachers spend time thinking about ways to present information in positive ways that will be memorable for students. This light touch affects not only attention-getting goals, but also creativity, ingenuity, participation, and pride of ownership. (pp.27-28)

As presented by the diagram below, humor, in classroom, is extremely multifaceted:

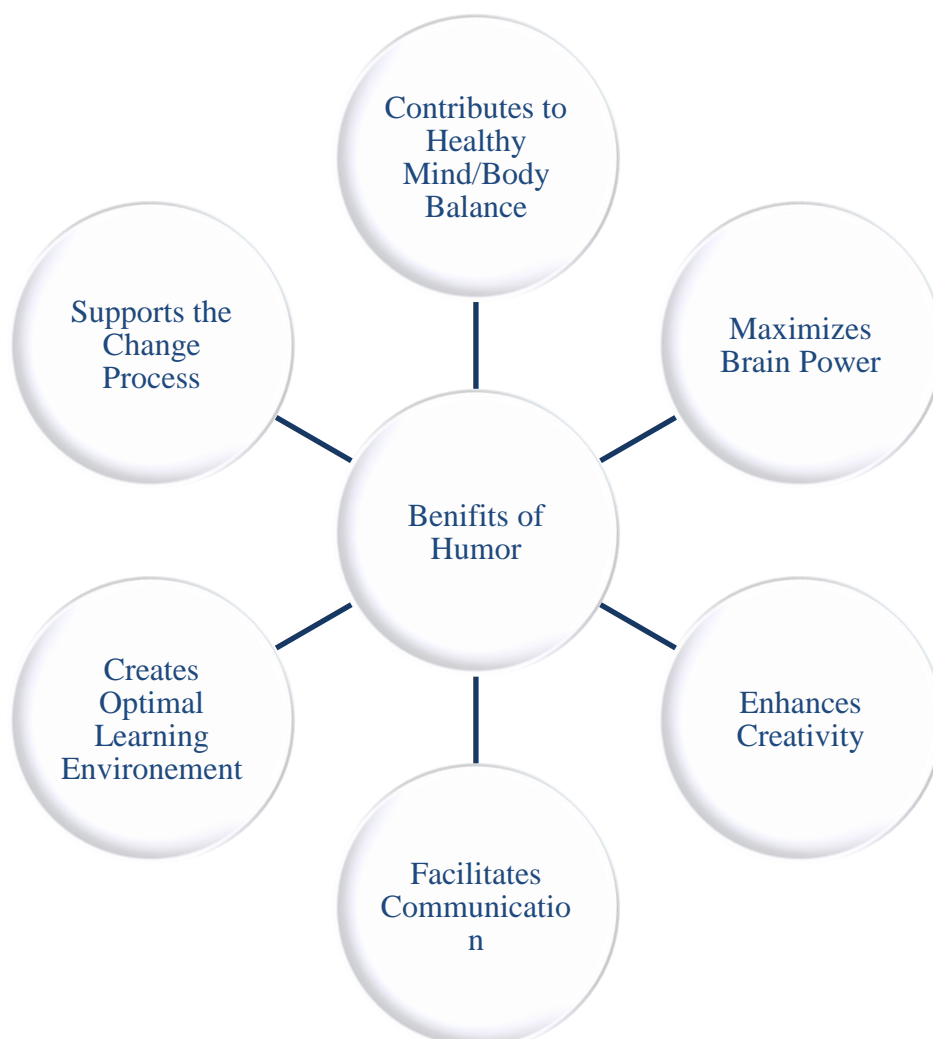


Figure II.2 *Benefits of Humor in Classroom (Morrison, 2008, p. 10).*

In the other hand, like other things in life, the benefits are usually accompanied by negative things, and humor is no exception. Researchers have had a contradictory negative perspective regarding the effect of humor on EFL learners' information retention. According to Wandersee, (1982) *"humor is like a stick of dynamite. In an expert's hands it can blast away obstructions between subject matter and student. But in a novice's grasp, it may destroy a lesson just as easily"* (212). That's to say; humor can be used for constructive, as well as for deconstructive

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purposes. In the same vein, Jeder (2014) state that “*Different forms of humor such as irony or sarcasm may become variations of hostile, offensive, potentially conflictual humor. In this vein, both irony and sarcasm is met in the classroom also as a sanction directed towards the students*” (p830). Effectiveness of non-relevant humor diminishes with age so that by adulthood, non-relevant humor is not only acceptable, but can even hinder the acquisition of information. Therefore Sullivan (1992) cautions that: (1) teachers must recognize when humor is not appropriate; (2) teachers should never joke about a student's name because of the potential damage to the student's self-esteem; and (3) teachers should not simply tell jokes in class, but should keep their humor relevant to the instruction since telling jokes reduces valuable class time and may result in sexist and racist humor that will create problems. Also using too much humor during the session may lead to discipline problems and wasting of time. Offensive humor, excessive humor and aggressive humor are negative styles that are inappropriate for EFL learner. Additionally, Shade (1996) proposed a list of forewarnings about using humor in the classroom that contains the list of humor types below which can have devastating effects on students, as well as the overall classroom environment:

1. **Distractions:** the use of irrelevant humor which has no direct relation to the lesson topic is often results in devastation and distraction from the learning outcomes.
2. **Hostile-Humor** (aggressive humor): the use of such type of humor may lead to non-productive and punishing outcomes to all involved. This form of humor is often associated with feeling of superiority and aggression in which a target (learner) is humiliated, insulted, embarrassed, or physically hurt.
3. **Sarcasm:** similar to the latter form of humor, which refers to the use of humor for the sake of belittling others. It is often brutal; the word itself has a Greek origin (sarkasmos) that means to tear flesh.
4. **Ethnic/ racial/religious jokes:** Jokes in which a particular ethnic group is demeaned, ridiculed, made fun of.
5. **Sick-Jokes:** Making fun of death, deformity, disease, or handicapping conditions.

In general, Information delivered humorously is absolutely unforgettable. “*We naturally born with “the most amazing software” – our brains- which are capable of storing 20 million computer CDs worth of information*” (Kerr, 2002, p.61). What if the latter is presented in a funny way! As Jonas States that “*Instructors who use humor, even if it is not the best humor in the world, are still more appreciated than instructors who do not try humor*” (2010, p. 3). However, the teacher’s sense of humor may affect student negatively.

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Teaching strategies require some rules/ guidelines to be obeyed. The appropriate and timely humor relies on a set of principles. Following these standards, it will be easy for teachers to make humor an integral part of material to be learnt, and then their teaching will be conducive to optimal learning.

II.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researchers provide the reader with the definition of information retention, the definition of learning and its types and the definition of memory, and its types. Following this, the researchers discuss the rationale for this study, which is how humor is linked to EFL learners' information retention. Eventually, a clear distinction between the positive and negative influences of using humor in classroom setting is considered in this section.

Chapter
Three

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

III.1 Introduction

The present study is undertaken for the sake of investigating the effect of teacher's use of humor as a pedagogical strategy on EFL learner's information retention. Furthermore, throughout this chapter the researchers outline the research methodology. Selecting the appropriate methodology for a research work helps to conduct valid investigation, so the researchers begin by explaining how the theoretical part and the research questions influenced their methodological decisions. The definition and the features of both qualitative and quantitative approach are included in this chapter. Then, the researchers explain the reasons why a mixed method approach was utilized, in order to answer the research questions. In the subsequent section, a presentation of the sample population and the reasons for selecting the participants are included. Moreover, the researchers explain the specific process of data collection instruments, which included interview, questionnaire, and observation.

III.2 Research Design and Methodology

It is obvious that we need some methodology without which the objective we aim to achieve would be difficult to attain. Methodology is the practical way for achieving the aim of the research undertaken. Its emphasis on the research plan, structure, and execution under scientific criteria leads to regard it as an integral part of any study conducted. According to Mouton and Marais (1996), the research methodology focuses on the manner in which the research was planned, structured and executed in order to comply with scientific criteria. For Leedy (1993) through research methodology, the researcher is able to explain the nature of data, select the appropriate methods to process data collected in order to, at the end, generate the findings. On such grounds, various authors argue that there are many diverse epistemological and pragmatic influences on the choice of research methods. Polkinghorne (1992, p.233, as cited in Garner et al, 2009) states that:

There is no single method that is privileged in the production of knowledge about human existence. Each method, including those that employ numeric procedures and those that employ qualitative procedures, is a lens that can bring into focus particular aspects of human being ... choice of method for a particular project depends on which most useful for addressing the research question. (p.68)

According to Woody "*research comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and at last carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis*" cited in (Kothari,2004 p1). Therefore,

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research design is defined as follows: “*it is the blueprint that is followed to complete the study*” and it “*ensures that the study is relevant to the problem and will use economical procedure*”. ((Kinnear and Taylor, 1996,p.67) . In short, methodology is needed for doing any research in any domain.

Within the scope of the present study, a case study method tries to identify a problem and give a set of suggestions and solutions. Yin (1994) defined a case study as “*an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident...[and] relies on multiple sources of evidence*” (p. 13). That’s to say, one should use a case study strategy because he or she deliberately wants to study contextual conditions. Furthermore, Yin (2003) identifies three types of case studies; descriptive case study which is used to describe a particular phenomenon within its context and answer the question “what”, explanatory case study which explores cause-effect relationships, it answers the question “what”, and exploratory case study which is to define questions and hypotheses, and answers both questions “what” and “how” .

The current work is a descriptive exploratory case study since it aims at knowing the effects of teachers ‘ use of humor on EFL learners information retention, and how do teachers and learners perceive the use of humor in the classroom context .

III.3 Research Approaches

In this work, the researchers use the mixed method approach; the qualitative and quantitative approaches have been utilized.

Qualitative research proceeds from a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such us “*real world setting where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest*” (Patton, 1990, p.30). In this vein, the qualitative approach is used in this work simply because it usually works with a recorded interview, rely on small sample size and an interpretive analysis. That’s to say, the strength of qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to explore a phenomenon through the lens of the subjects who participated in the study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). As one of the researchers’ main aim is to gain insights into the intentions and perceptions of teachers who incorporated humor in their teaching and of students’ on the teachers’ use of humor; the qualitative approach effectively allows for an exploration of how people behave, feel and think within a context. In the other hand, the quantitative approach also fitted our research question “What are the effects of teachers ‘use of humor on EFL learners information

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retention?”. Hence the quantitative approach can be used in response to relational questions of variables within the research. Dornyei (2007) acknowledges that “*the qualitative approach basically relies on numerical data, prior categorization, variables rather than cases as discussed in section, statistics and language of statistic section and standardized procedures to assess objectives reality section*” (p34) .

As we began delving into the literature of humor in teaching and how it might affect the learning and teaching outcomes especially learner’s information retention, and how teachers and EFL learners perceive it; it became clear that our research questions could be addressed most effectively using the mixed method approach. According to researchers, mixed method research has been defined as a third research approach. In this context, (Creswell et al, 2003) define a mixed approach as follow:

Researchers have been referring to studies that combine qualitative and quantitative methods under variety of names, such as multitrait-multimethod research, inter-relating quantitative and qualitative data, methodological triangulation, multi-methodological research, mixed model studies, and mixed method research. Cited in (Dornyei, 2007 p42)

The rational for mixed method approach is to have a better understanding of the topic. Hence, understanding complements between a quantitative results and qualitative findings and cover some weaknesses of each approach.

III.4 Research Context and Participants

This study is conducted at Bellafdhah Ba Yazid and Nouioui Touhami middle schools. Bellafdhah Ba Yazid middle school classes were composed of humorous educational lessons; however, Nououi Touhami classes were composed of no humorous educational lessons in order to see how can humor affect learner’s information retention (positively or negatively), and how pupils react to those lessons. And most importantly whether differences may be found between the two types of teaching used, with the major aim of interfering the roles of humor in educational teaching of English.

The participants were students of 4MS (male and females). The pupils were 60% females and 40% males. Middle school classes were chosen for investigation because the process of learning EFL begins earlier in the middle school. Consequently, at this stage the humor should be integrated in the curriculum and the appreciation of the target language and humor understanding is established. 4th year middle school pupils were opted particularly because they are more mature, and at this age they already know the language and their background is the most appropriate and relevant to the subject which allows them to understand the questionnaire.

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III.5 Data Collection Instruments

As our work was a descriptive exploratory study, the three main research tools questionnaire, interview and observation have been used to investigate the effects of teacher's use of humor on learner's information retention and to gain an exploration of how teacher and learners perceive the insertion of humor in the classroom setting. Additionally, the combination of these data collection instruments leads to increasing credibility and validity of the research.

Triangulation method

Many researchers advocate and highlight the use of a number of methods to collect data in an academic research work. This belief stems out of the idea that various methods within the same research work is a good practice, especially when the study addresses a large number of questions. That is each method tests hypotheses from different angles and checks a part of the truth. Therefore the combination of these methods leads to uncovering the whole truth. This methodological strategy of combining multiple data collection instruments in academic setting has been known as Triangulation. In this context, Heale and Frobes (2017) argue that triangulation in research can be defined as the use of multiple theories, data sources, and methods in studying certain phenomenon. Within the same perspective, Green and Thorogood (2004) state that:

The notion of triangulation borrows a metaphor from navigation, with the idea that taking two readings will enable us to point out the "truth" more accurately than one. Thus, one method of data collection can be used to offset the weakness of another, or to 'check out' the validity of findings. (p.207-208)

Figure 3.1 on the next page shows a visual model of the research design employed in this study.

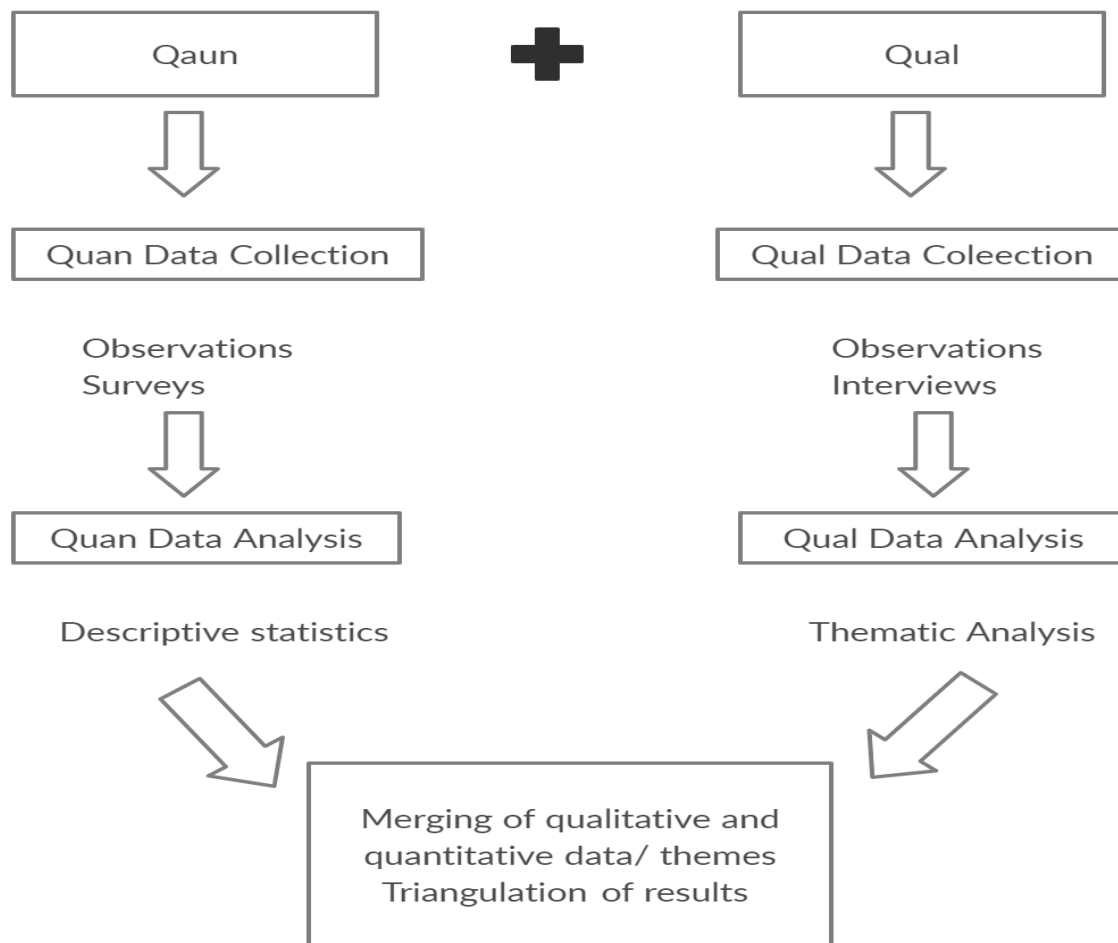


Figure III.1 Visual Resrach Design (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, and Hanson (2003); as cited in Hoang Nguyen, (2014), p.55)

It has generally been agreed on that “the *purpose of using triangulation is to increase the credibility and validity of the results*” (Yaesmin and Rahman, 2012, p.154). That’s to say, as far as the findings of the research work are concerned, triangulation, as a multi method approach is a more reliable source because at this level several methods such as the questionnaire, interview and the classroom observation may contrast to increase the validity and the credibility of the study and the researcher's confidence.

III.5.1 Learner’s Questionnaire

In any research, vehicles are needed to move from our broad interest to a specific research focus. One of these vehicles is questionnaire, which the researchers formulate in order to collect and analyze data. Questionnaires are the guide to empirical evidence that is required in investigation. Accordingly, “*the questionnaire is a widely used instrument for gathering information, providing structured, often numerical data, it can be administered without the presence of the researcher*” (Wilson and McLean, 1994, p 245). Additionally,

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Munn & Dreyer (1990) note that questionnaires provide anonymity for the respondents, also it doesn't cost time and it supplies the possibility of high return rates. In short, questionnaire is the key to any empirical research project and it is well established instrument used in research methodology in order to gain data from a specific population.

III.5.1.1 Types of Questions

The two types of questions are included in the learner's questionnaire.

- a) Open ended questions: *“Enable participants to write a free account in their own terms, to explain and qualify their responses and avoid limitations of pre-set categories of responses”* (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000, p.248). This type of question is used to enable the respondents to answer as much as they wish, also to make sure that they are feeling comfortable when they answering the questions and to avoid bias, and are particularly suitable for investigating complex issues to which simple answers cannot be provided.
- b) Close ended questions: most of prepared questions are closed ended. The participants choose one of the pre- determined answers. Moreover, Foddy (1993) stated that *“Closed questions lock respondents into arbitrarily limited alternatives”* (p127). In this study, the researcher provided the respondents with multiple choices questions.

III.5.1.2 Administration and Procedure

The questionnaire was mainly designed for 4MS pupils (see Appendix A). However, the questionnaire was translated into the participants' native language (Arabic), so that they can comprehend the items fully. A forward and backward translation was done to maintain equivalence and to assure the linguistic and cultural validity of the test questionnaire in the target language. In this study, the questionnaire is designed for 4MS pupils purposefully since they have a basic understanding of English and they can simply brainstorm ideas and give possible answers to the questions the researchers want them to answer.

In a time of crisis, such as now, and due to the adverse circumstances, the lockdown and mandated social distancing meant physical surveys are a no-go. A virtual questionnaire seemed to be the ideal, or maybe the only choice. The questionnaire has been administered online to 4MS pupils from both middle schools of Bellafdhah Bayazid and Nouioui Touhami. With a target of seventy participants from both schools, the researchers sent an online form of the questionnaire on messenger groups, keeping in mind that many potential respondents may refuse to participate because they are not accustomed with such thing or have other more important things to worry about. However, the survey yielded a 100% response rate.

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III.5.1.3 Questionnaire Design

Questionnaires should be well designed, well worded, and appropriately ordered to be good enough for any empirical research. Designing a questionnaire is a very difficult task since the researcher must carefully formulate the question depending on specific objectives. Furthermore, Swetnam (2004) argues that they have to be related to the research hypotheses, with the understanding that each question can be sub-divided to further short, simple questions that are easily manageable and controlled by the researcher. The researchers designed the survey to be as short and easy as possible so that it did not add unduly stress on the participants. The questions revolve around two headlines preceded by student's background information (student's gender and school).

Section one: Humor and learning

In this section, the researcher tries to establish links between humor and learning environment. Series of questions are attempted to be asked.

- (Q1): Does your teacher use humor in the classroom? (Never / rarely/ sometimes/ often/ always).
- (Q2): do you enjoy the humor integrated in the EFL classroom learning? (Yes/No)?
- (Q3): Do you understand the humor used? (Yes/No)
- (Q4): Does humor help in your process of learning in the class? (Strongly agree /agree / neutral/ disagree/ strongly disagree)
- (Q5): Which form of humor do you prefer? (Jokes/ Puns/ Funny riddles)
- (Q6): Can you provide one brief example of humor or joke used by your teacher?

Section two: Humor and information retention

In this section, the researcher attempts to investigate if the use of humor will increase and sustain the EFL learner's information retention during the learning process. Hence, it is obligatory to mention the relationships between humor and EFL learner's information retention. This section attempted to answer the following major questions:

- (Q1): Does humor increase your information retention ability? (Yes/No)
- (Q2) Do you think that humorous teachers help learners to retain what they have been taught?
- (Q3): Does the use of humor effect EFL learner's information retention positively or negatively? Explain?
- (Q4): What are the challenges learner's faces when using humor during the learning process?

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III.5.1.4 The motifs of the Questionnaire

The actual questionnaire is designed to investigate the effect of teacher's use of humor on EFL learner's information retention. Lohrey (2017) argued that a questionnaire is a useful tool for gathering information. The questionnaire should focus on specific aims and objectives, including asking and collecting the right type of information and making sure each question is specific, objective and understandable.

III.5 .2 Teachers' Interview

In this study, we used an interview as a corroborative data collection method (see Appendix B). The researchers' choice to use the interview as a method and in particular after the questionnaire can be explained by Swetnam's and Swetnam's claim that "*interviewing is a method of collecting data that can stand on its own or be a follow-up process to another method*" and that "*interviews should never be random as they demand a heavy investment of time*" (2000, p.64), which means, there are several matters to be considered in the process of planning, conducting, and analyzing interviews. Interviews can be defined as "*A meeting at which somebody is asked questions to find out if they are suitable for a job, course of study, etc.*" (Oxford student's dictionary, p.391).

III.5 .2.1 Semi-structured Interview

Any researcher should be aware that they may encounter many different types of interview as they go through the hiring process (recruiting process) at different schools or companies. One common type of interviewing technique is a semi-structured interview. Strauss and schinke (2019) stated that in semi-structured interviewing, the researcher uses a preplanned interview guide gently to direct the interaction while giving the participants the opportunity to report on their own thoughts, behaviors, and feelings. The interviewer then exerts some control, but the amount of control they exerts over what a participant can say and how they can say is quite small. Generally, the semi-structured interview is a meeting in which the interviewer prepares a list of questions but does not necessarily ask them all; he may ask more open-ended questions, allowing for a discussion with the interviewee rather than a straightforward question and answer format.

III.5 .2.2 conduct and procedure

Because the teacher's role is of paramount importance in facilitating the learning process and his responsibility is to make the best use of the materials and procedures within this topic. It is necessary to consider their attitudes and perspectives about the application of

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humor in educational context for the sake of effectively explore the use of humor as a teaching tool. Therefore, the researchers first met the teacher participants working to leave a good impression and to build mutual trust. An information sheet had been distributed, which contained a brief explanation of the research (see Appendix E). The teachers had been requested to write down their names and contact details if they were interested in participating in an interview. The researchers implicitly targeted two types of teachers; ones who are known for not integrating humor in the teaching learning process, and the others who are commonly known as humorous teachers. Subsequently two female teachers from the targeted schools considered our request and took part in our interview sessions. Thus, the researchers contacted them individually to set up a time and date for an interview session. However, the format of interviews is shifting from in-person to virtual this year; therefore, instead of a face to face interview, an online interview had been conducted.

Moreover, with the interviewees' permission, the virtual interview sessions were in a form of voice messages to capture the entire interview discussion and gather all information that could be pertinent to current study. The researcher transcribed the interview in a written documentation to be analyzed later (see Appendix C). The interviews ranged from about 25 minutes to forty five minutes in length.

III.5.2.3 The Description of the interview

There are a variety of potential interview formats, ranging from “*highly structured/standardized to a semi-structured to unstructured/informal*” (Merriam, 1998, p.73). For the purpose of this study, we opted for a semi-structured interview. Hence, Punch (1998) tenders that this form of interview is a way to understand the complex behavior of people without invading their space, which might limit the field of inquiry. The semi-structured questions helped the researchers to create a sense of direction for the interview session. The Teacher's interview is divided into two rubrics:

The first is generally concerned with the teacher's perception about the use of humor in the classroom, the size of using humor. Additionally, it aims at knowing the appropriate kind of humor used and if the pupils enjoyed it during the learning process or not. Knowing if teachers use humor spontaneously or purposefully is also considered in this rubric.

The second rubric is about teacher's sense of humor and pupils' information retention. Generally, the interviewee was asked if there is a relation between the use of humor in the classroom context and pupil's information retention and if less humorous teacher has anything to do with pupil's information retention. Moreover, the interviewee is asked to

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uncover the difficulties he/she has faced when adopting humor in the classroom. Interests with how humorous teacher effects positively or negatively pupils' information retention have been revealed by the participants.

III.5 .2.4 The reason of the Interview

The reason behind the teacher's interview is to know their attitudes and perspectives about the application of humor in educational context and using it as a teaching tool. The purpose of this interview is twofold: It shows us what the teacher can do for the pupils, and it gives the teachers an opportunity to assess whether their qualifications and career ambitions align with the position.

III.5 .3 Classroom Observation

The third research tool that was used in this piece of research to collect data is the classroom observation (see Appendix D). Observation is defined as "*the act of watching sb\sth carefully, especially to learn sth*" (oxford student's dictionary, p.494). This means that classroom observation is an act of observing learner's behavior in the classroom. It often used to provide teachers with constructive critical feedback for the sake of improving their techniques and classroom management.

III.5 .3.1 Conduct and procedures

The populations targeted through this study are 4MS pupils in both Ba Yazid and Nouioui Touhami middle schools located in kenchela, and two female Middle School English teachers. After we have been permitted to conduct our observation in Ba Yazid and Nouioui Touhami middle schools, we started our visits to the two different schools; each of the researchers went to a different school. Each teacher applied a different strategy in the classroom, Ba Yazid middle school teacher applied humor as teaching strategy, however, Nouioui Touhami middle school teacher did not apply humor in the classroom. Quantitative data were collected through a series of site visits to middle schools for one week, classes were observed on a one-time basis for sixty minute period. 4 MS pupils were sampled in order to compare the teachers' practices and techniques of teaching and to see the pupil's reaction towards those techniques. The majority of the observations were recorded in a form of check lists tables as this form of recording data is less time consuming. These observations took place during the 9th to the 13th of February, 2020.

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III.5 .3.3 Aim of the observation

For the sake of gathering the appropriate data needed for the present study and to observe learner's behavior, the researchers have opted for Classroom Observation as a data collection tool. Additionally, it is important to know about the different techniques used by the teachers in the classroom and to get a hint about the way they deal with humor as a teaching strategy in the classroom. The focus of the classroom observation is on the teaching techniques that alert teachers need to use in order to help their learners to keep and retain the learned information.

III.6 Conclusion

This study examines the teacher's use of humor in middle schools educational settings and its influence on student's information retention. Hence, the present chapter aims at describing the sample and methods used for data collection. In order to accomplish the aims of the study; the following tools are used for collecting data: a questionnaire for learners, an interview for teachers and finally a classroom observation.

Chapter

Four

Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

IV.1 Introduction

So far, the review of literature has been surveying humor and information retention. Following that, the research methodology and design selected for the current study are presented. The next step of any research design is to move to something more practical. To further consider, it is necessary for data to be collected, analyzed, and discussed in order to draw the final conclusions. In this chapter we analyze the gathered data of the three instruments; pupils' questionnaire, teachers' semi-structured interview, and classroom observations.

IV.2 Data Analysis

As the current study had a concurrent triangulation design (see Figure III.1), it included a mixed method form of analysis (Creswell et al. 2003). Hence, the researchers started with a separate initial data analysis for each of the qualitative and the quantitative data with the purpose of comparing results and thus drawing a more detailed picture.

The results derived from the pupils' questionnaire were entered and calculated using *Google Form Survey* to yield the distribution of pupils' responses for each questionnaire item in the form of percentages. From this perspective, the quantitative data analysis was a descriptive analysis as it *“provides simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Together with simple graphical analysis, they form the basic virtual of any quantitative analysis of data”* (Descriptive Analysis, n.d. p.2).

The teachers' interview scripts were analyzed using the thematic approach, defined as *“a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data”* (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The reason we chose this method was that *“rigorous thematic approach can produce an insightful analysis that answers particular research questions”* (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.97). The following is a brief summary of the steps involved in analyzing the data from the semi-structured interview. We transcribed the audio recordings verbatim and then, we reread the transcripts carefully. Since transcribing recordings in their entirety can be a fairly cumbersome task, a compromise solution is to simply identify and write down the main themes that emerge while listening to the records, a step encouraged by Laforest (2009). After that we identified the most important points outlined by the interviewees. For our study, we followed the process of thematic analysis that King and Horrocks (2010) outlined. This involves three stages, which we outline in Figure IV.1:

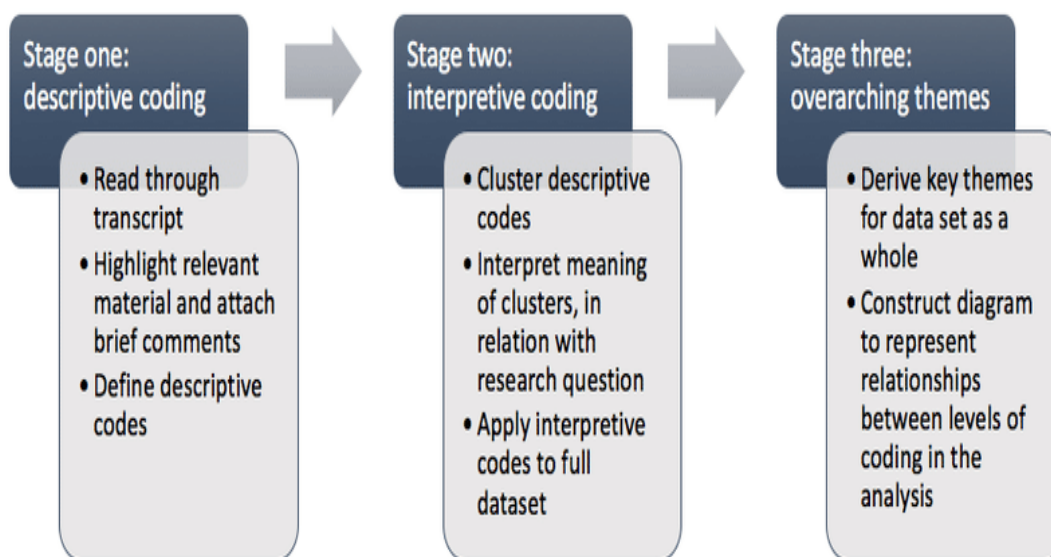


Figure IV.1 *Stages in the process of thematic analysis* (King and Horrocks, 2010, p.153).

The observations were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively, focusing on teachers' humor instances. These instances were identified, counted and categorized whenever there was laughter or giggles during the learning process. Pupils' reactions to these incidents were also noted in the researchers' field notes.

IV.2.1 the Results of Pupils' Questionnaire

This section contains the results relating to statements asking 4MS pupils for their opinions about the relationship between humor and learning in general and humor and information retention in specific.

IV.2.1.1 Background Questions

Pupils' Gender

Table IV.I Pupils' Gender

Male		Female	
N°	%	N°	%
18	26%	52	74%

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From the table above, it is clear that the number of female pupils is more than the male pupils. It is noted that fifty two (52) female pupils have participated in this questionnaire, while only eighteen (18) male pupils have answered the questionnaire. This shows that the female pupils represent the dominant gender with (74%) whereas male pupils make the minority gender with the percentage of (26%).

Middle School:

Table IV.2 Pupils Middle school

Bellafdhah Bayazid Middle school		Nouioui Touhami Middle School	
N°	%	N°	%
36	51%	34	49%

What is noticed most in this table is that the majority of the respondents (51%) are from Bellafdhah Bayazid Middle school. The reason for the inclusion of two schools in this study and mixed gender in both groups of participants (teachers and students) was to explore the differences in perceptions and practices regarding humor in different contexts, by different language users (teachers), and different audiences (pupils). The inequalities helped draw a more detailed picture of humor in an EFL context, and led to more thorough answers for the research questions.

IV.2.1.2 Section One: Humor and Learning

Question one: Does your teacher of English use humor in the classroom?

Table IV.3: The teacher's use of humor in the classroom

Option	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Subjects	0	34	10	22	4
Percentages %	0%	49%	14%	31%	6%

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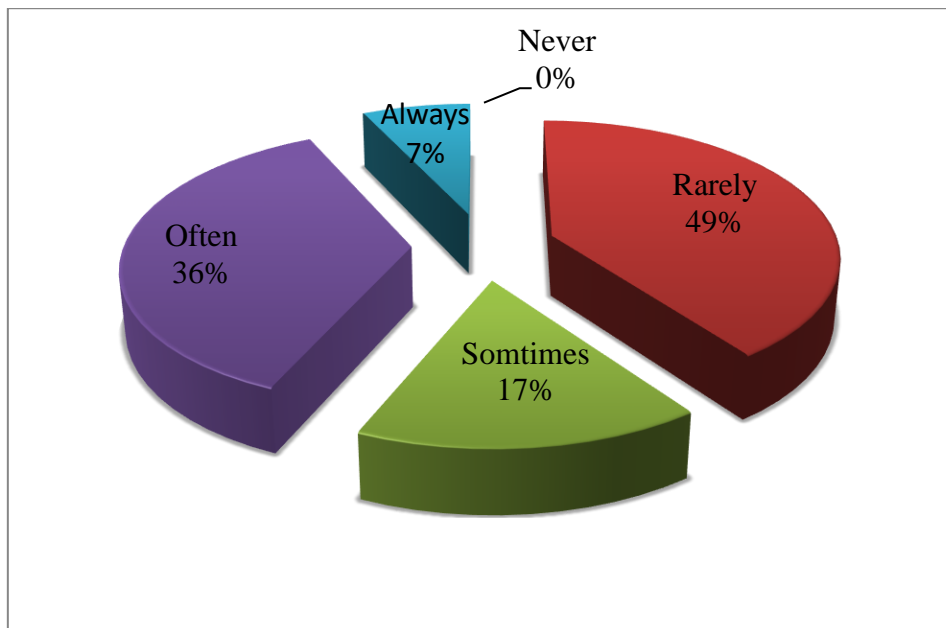


Figure IV.2 *The teacher's use of humor in the classroom.*

This question is the basic of the research work; therefore, the table is followed by a graph (pie chart) to clarify the results presented on it. The item spots a light on the pupils' proclamations about their teachers' frequency of using humor in the classroom. Most of pupils (49%) claimed that humor is rarely used by their teacher during the learning process. However, twenty two (22) of the participants (36%) claimed that humor is often used by their teacher, (17%) is in the sometimes slot, the rate (7%) is concerned with the pupils who their teacher is always using humor. The most noticeable issue is that the never slot is blank. Hence, this distribution of opinions indicates that the teachers might welcome humor in foreign language learning, but they were not in a position to be certain of the appropriate amount of using humor. The reasons for this uncertainty among the teachers were explored in the interviews and are reported later.

Question two: Do you enjoy the humor integrated in the EFL classroom?

Table IV.4: Humor and Pupils' Enjoyment

Option	Yes	No
Subjects	57	13
Percentages %	81.5%	18.5%

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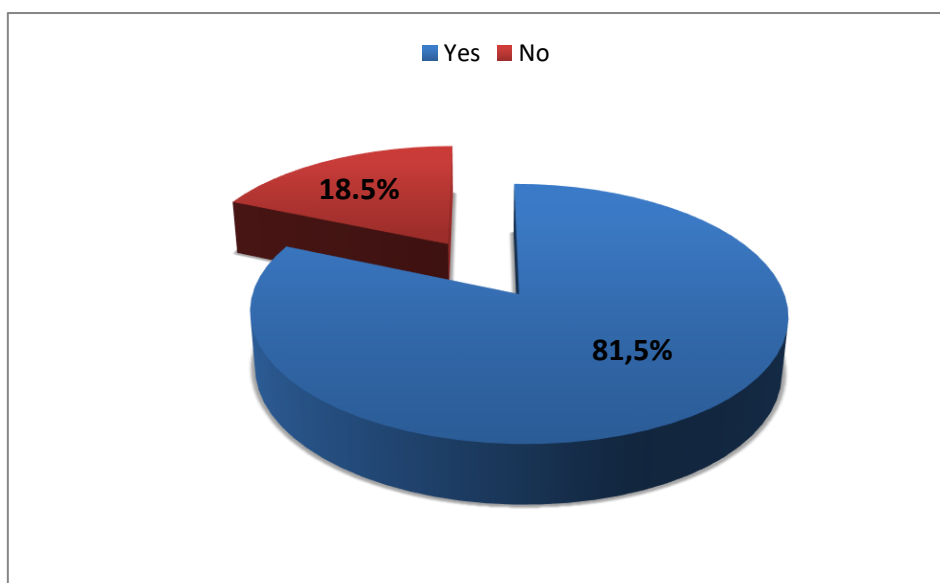


Figure IV.3 *Humor and Pupils' Enjoyment.*

Regarding the obtained results, the majority of the pupils (81, 5%) enjoyed the humor integrated in the classroom, whereas only (18, 5%) of the subjects showed an opposite stance. Therefore, this idea gained acceptance from the majority of the participants possibly due to the effective and appropriate use of humor by the teachers during the teaching learning process .While, the diverse pupils 'perspectives about the enjoyment of the humor integrated in the classroom may indicate that the humor used was offensive or not effective because of the teachers lack of knowledge on where, when and how to use humor. That's to say, in order for humor to be effective; it must rely heavily on delivery.

Question three: Does humor help in your process of learning in the classroom?

Table IV.5: Humor as a teaching tool

No Response	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
0	57	81.5%	8	11.5%	5	7%

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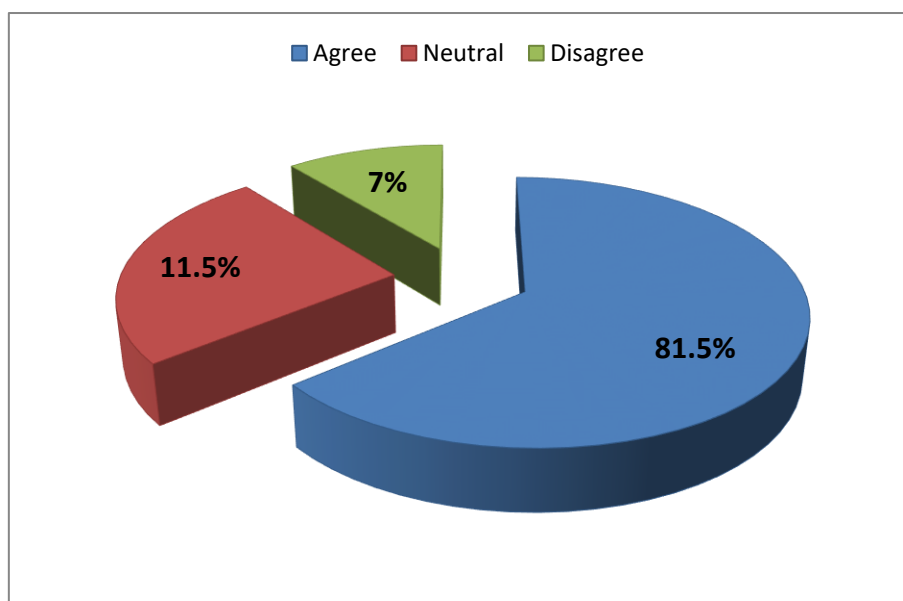


Figure IV.4 *Humor as a Teaching Tool.*

To confirm pupils' stances on humor as a supporting teaching tool in foreign language learning, the question "Does humor help in your process of learning in the classroom?" was included in the survey. The results show pupils quite divided on this matter. The most encouraging and frequently chosen option was 'Agree', with 81.5% (57 participants). The 'Disagree' and 'Neutral' groups were approximately equal: 11.5% (8 participants) were neutral, while 7% (5 participants) disagreed to some extent. Therefore, this distribution of opinions is possibly due to the fact that pupils appreciate and advocate humor as a teaching tool, yet it may destruct their focus on the subject matter if it's not used effectively. Hence, using humor effectively in the classroom requires knowledge, art and skill which a teacher has to learn.

Question four: aimed at knowing the different form of humor preferred by the pupils.

Table IV.6: Forms of humor

Jokes		Puns		Riddles		Others	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
29	41%	23	33	18	26%	0	0%

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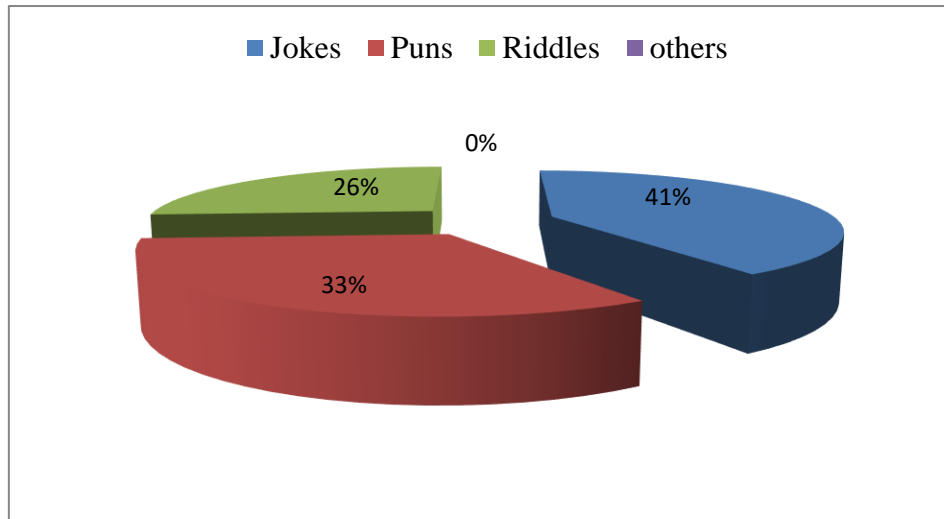


Figure IV.5 *Forms of humor preferred by the Pupils.*

Regarding the graph above, there are different views concerning the forms of humor that learners are in favor of. The ‘Jokes’ option was held by the largest percentage at 41%: this form of humor was chosen by 29 pupils. 23 pupils (33%) are in favor of Puns, while the last suggested form of humor ‘Riddles’ was chosen by 18 pupils (26%). Unfortunately, no new options were emerged as we expected. Hence, this diversity reflects the personality of each teacher; each teacher has his/her own way of using humor as a pedagogical strategy to enhance learning and develops a classroom environment in which learning is both interesting and entertaining.

Question five: Can you provide on brief example of humor or jokes used by your teacher?

This open ended question was analyzed by extracting codes from the responses. The responses were printed and coded manually; the researchers highlighted each response with a code. Afterward, the codes were organized and categorized in the following table:

Table IV.7: Instances of humor or joke used in the classroom

No response		Jokes related to the lesson		Jokes to start the lesson		Jokes about the teacher’s life experience		Funny acting/ mimicking	
N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
34	49%	14	20%	15	21%	5	7%	2	3%

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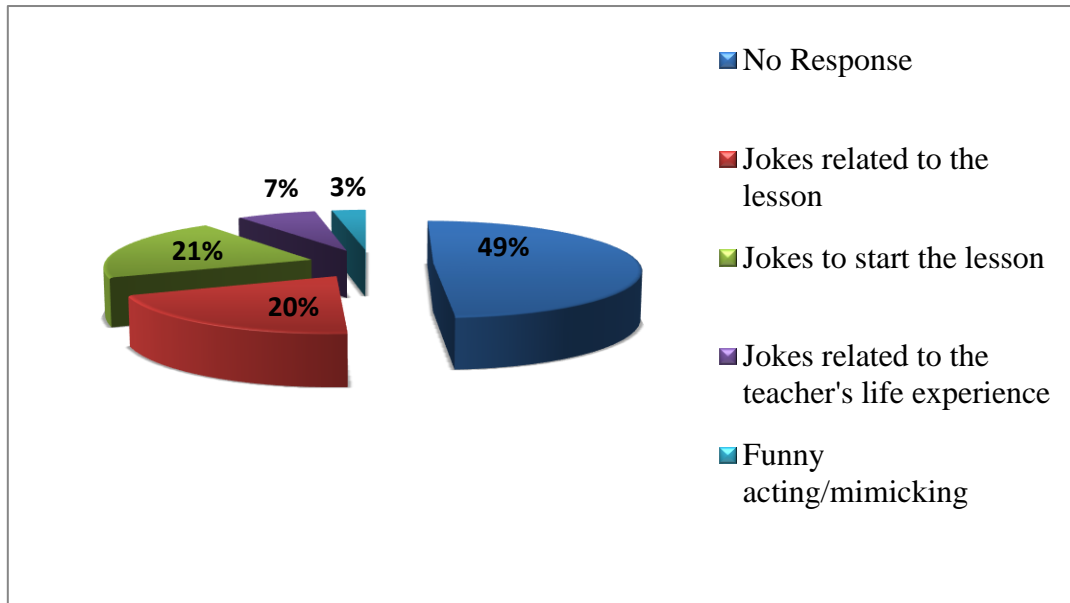


Figure IV.6 Instance of humor used in the classroom.

According to Table IV.7 and its visual data represented in the graph above, a sum of 49% (34 participants) has skipped this question and this may indicate that the respondents' teachers are non-humorous teachers or they possibly used inappropriate/ bad jokes. The other proportions were almost evenly distributed into 'jokes related to the lesson' with 20% (14 participants), 'jokes to start the lesson' was the instance of humor that was held by 15 participants (21%), the rate 7% is concerned with 'jokes related to the teacher's life experience', this instance of humor was provided by 5 participants. Only 2 participants (3%) proclaimed that their teachers used funny acting or mimicking to integrate humor in the classroom. Considering the results in Table IV.3, the distribution of opinions in Table IV.7 is simply a logical follow-on. Hence, by personal ratiocination, pupils are always remembering teacher who uses humor in his/her teaching process (humorous teachers are always unforgettable).

The following are some instances provided by the pupils:

- 'We were studying about universal landmark, so the teacher said a joke related to the lesson. She started like this: What happened when I lost my balance on Paris's most famous landmark? , we could not answer her but at the end she said Eiffel .All the class was laughing'
- 'My teacher always starts her lesson by a joke. One of her joke is: I like to start my lesson by showing you a small clip , we all were excited to watch a video clip but she pulled out a paper clip from her bag'

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- ‘I remember after the math test we were so tired and sad, the teacher of English wanted to make us happy so she told us a funny story about her son, she asked her son did you enjoy your first day at school, he answered: first day? Do you mean I have to come back tomorrow?’
- ‘ If we still have time left , our teacher plays with us guess the word game , she tries to act out the word , she was so funny’

IV.2.1.3 Section two: Humor and Information retention

Question one: Does humor increase your information retention ability?

Table IV.8: Humor and information retention’s enhancement

No Response		Yes		No	
N ^o	%	N ^o	%	N ^o	%
0	0%	60	85%	10	15%

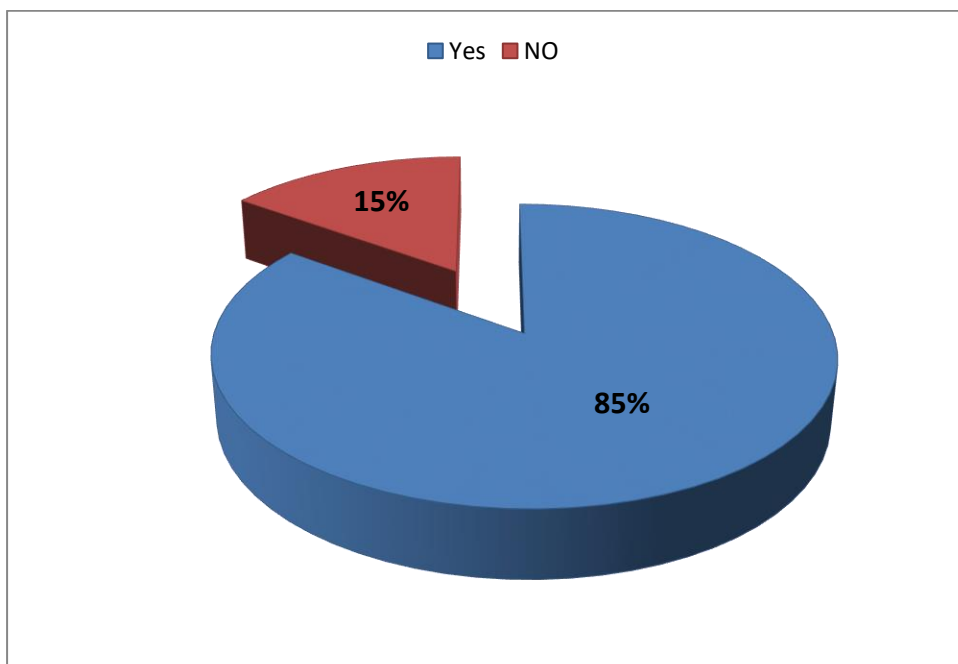


Figure IV. 7 *Humor and Information Retention’s Enhancement.*

The graph above shows pupils’ opinions towards the question, ‘Does humor increase your information retention ability?’ This question was included with the intention of an exploration of pupils’ perceptions of humor and their information retention. A great majority of the participants, 60 or 85% strongly agreed and believed that humor helped them retain information easily. In the other hand, only 15% (ten participants) did not think so. This uncertainty is possibly due to the fact that the humor used was a disturbing teaching device and a destruction.

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Question two: Does the use of humor affect EFL learners' information retention positively or negatively? Explain?

Table IV.9: The effects of humor in EFL learner's information retention

No response		Positive effects		Negative effects		Both	
N ^o	%	N ^o	%	N ^o	%	N ^o	%
1	1%	56	80%	10	15%	3	4%

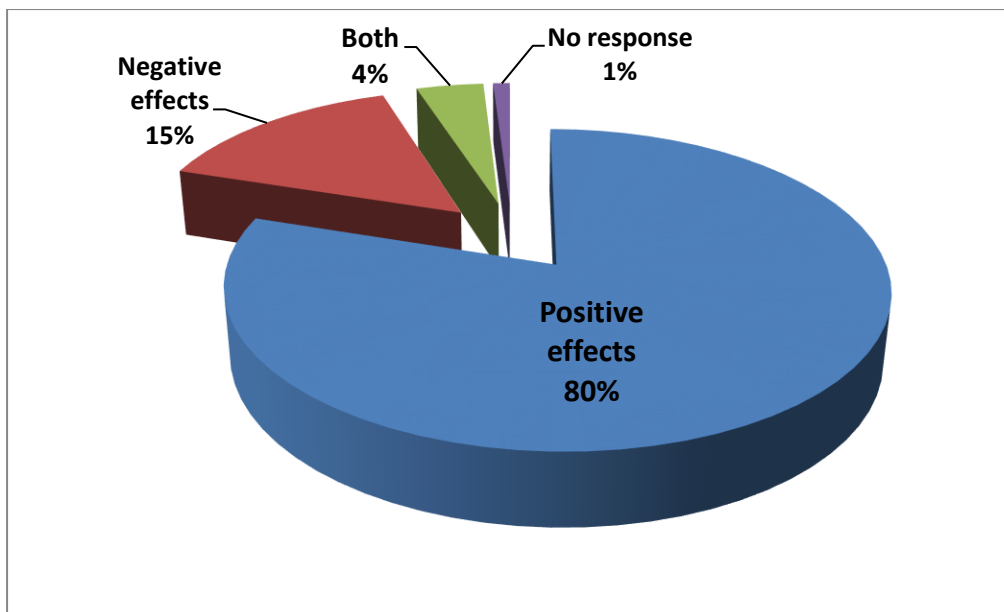


Figure IV.8 *The Effects of Humor in EFL Learner's Information Retention.*

The analysis of the above graph shows that over eighty percent (80%) of the sample note that humor affects the pupils' information retention positively. Whereas, fifteen percent (15%) of the population said that humor has a negative influence on their information retention. A new option was emerged, only four percent (4%) of the participants noted that using humor inside the classroom may have positive and negative effects.

According to the respondents; Humor impacts pupils' information retention positively because it:

- It helps them focus on the lesson and thus it promotes retention
- It makes pupils feel more comfortable because it can create a sense of immediacy in the classroom between them and their teacher.
- It aids to create a joyful and supportive learning atmosphere.
- Pupils can easily memorize the information exemplified by humor and thus some vocabulary are stored effortlessly .

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Humor affects pupils' information retention negatively because:

- It's a time wasting .
- Pupils disrespect the teacher.
- It leads to discipline problems.
- It destruct the pupils' attention.
- Offensive use of humor for example sarcasm.
- Irrelevant humor make the learners focus more on the vague joke rather than the lesson presented.

Question three: How humorous teacher can influence the pupil's information retention?

Pupils note that teacher' sense of humor impacts their information retention by:

- Making the pupils feel at ease during the learning process.
- It helps the pupils to better understand the material being presented in the classroom
- Lesson will not be boring , thus the pupils automatically love learning English
- It facilitates the pupil's engagement and attention

Question four: What are the challenges a learner may face when integrating humor in the learning process?

The results of this question show that there are two contradicted categories; the first one believed that humor can not cause any problem during the learning process as it helps them enjoy the lesson, grabs their attention , creates a relaxing classroom atmosphere , in addition to so many reasons that are mentioned above . While, the second category stated that the use of humor during the learning process may cause:

- ' If we are laughing it means we are not learning'
- Distracting the pupil's attention
- ' bad , vague or repeated jokes'
- ' A teacher using a lot of humor is not professional'
- Losing class control and management
- 'If the teacher is not serious we disrespect him/her'

IV.2.2 the Results of Teachers' Interview

In this section, teachers' viewpoints on humor as a teaching strategy were divided into two contradicted groups: those who used humor and those who did not use humor in their teaching. Responses from teachers who used humor are presented first, followed by responses from the other group. Within each group, teachers'

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responses are analyzed in order to show the common patterns presented in their opinions regarding the themes mentioned in the interview.

IV.2.2.1 Teachers who used humor

As our study was conducted in two middle schools, we had an opportunity to interview more than two teachers of English. There were two female teachers (T1 and T3) who used humor in their lessons. Their teaching experience ranged from five to ten years, though no relationship was found between teaching experience and teachers' use of humor.

IV.2.2.1.1 Rubric one: Humor and teaching

Item one: aimed at knowing teachers' views of humor in the classroom.

From the obtained results, both teachers believed it was effective. (T1) revealed that *'humor is a valuable effective teaching tool that encourages a good atmosphere for learning which establishes and maintains relationships between the teacher and the pupil.'* (T3) shared the same opinion by saying *'personally, I believe that the use of humor is highly effective in the teaching learning process since it helps to relieve tension and stress in addition to facilitating tasks for both teacher and pupils'*. Their answers were based on pupils' laughter and their reaction during the teaching-learning process.

Item two: Do you use humor in the classroom? Why or why not? If yes, how often do you use humor?

On the whole, teachers' responses to this question show that humor is widely used in the classroom. (T1) claimed that *'Actually it depends on the lesson, but usually I use humor as a worming up, it can be a joke or a funny face right at the beginning of the lesson to set an easygoing mood for the lesson.'* (T3) said that *'I try to use humor in my class any time I have an opportunity'*. Their use of humor was justified as follows:

- It was to make pupils more relaxed, motivated and interested to the lesson
- It was to make pupils encouraged to participate
- To help the pupils remember the lesson more easily
- Humorous examples help them understand difficult points in the lesson

They also added, *'Actually I use humor in my class because the shortest distance between two people is a smile and sharing laughter after telling a joke to pupil's shows that we really care about them.'* (T1). Moreover, T3 affirmed that *'Actually humor is highly effective, especially because we are dealing with teenagers; we all know that most of them hate serious situations, that's why we tend to use humor so the lesson becomes more enjoyable'*.

Item three: Prepared or spontaneous humor.

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Generally, the answers to this question are divided into two views, (T1) said that most of time it is prepared this is to avoid misunderstanding he argued '*Because we intend to use it in order to break the ice at the beginning so the pupils feel more comfortable and open to learning. Humor can also be spontaneous in unexpected situations where a student asks an unexpected question*'. On the other hand, (T3) said that he uses humor spontaneously '*I tend to say my jokes naturally, because simply we can't plan the situations in class*'.

Item four: the kind of humor is mostly used.

When asked about what types of humor do they prefer to use in class, both of them said that they use a mixture between jokes, funny stories, singing, dancing ... etc. This diversity may possibly revolve around the teachers' personality and their attitudes towards the humor in the process of teaching.

Item five: Inappropriate types of humor.

Among the inappropriate types of humor in the class, sarcasm was the most common type that both teachers were against. T1 stated that '*teachers should avoid sarcasm; making fun of someone is not cool at all, in addition to some kinds of jokes like those related sex and race*'. Another inappropriate type was mentioned by (T3): '*Also repeating and overusing humor can be ineffective and inappropriate in the class*'. Teachers were also against politics humor, regional differences humor and pun/riddle. Explaining their opinion by saying that pupils may feel embarrassed, or feel distant and lonely

Item six: The perceived effectiveness of the lesson when humor was embodied.

When asked about the perceived effectiveness of the lessons when they embodied humor, both teachers considered that the lesson was effective in terms of pupils getting the key points of the lesson easier. They based their judgments on pupils' laughter, attention, and engagement. T1 claimed '*every time I use humor to explain points that are difficult to understand, my pupils become more interested and they can easily grasp the presented lesson*'. T3 even mentioned occasions when her pupils told her explicitly that they liked her class because it was so relaxing.

Item seven: Instances of effective/ ineffective uses of humor.

When asked about instances of effective or ineffective uses of humor the teachers had in the past, they were more concerned over their failure than their success. It was a good thing for these teachers to reflect upon what could be improved in their use of humor, T1 mentioned that '*practice makes perfect*'. The effective instances of teachers' uses of humor were varied, ranging from checking

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pupils' comprehension of previous lesson, introducing new lesson vocabulary, funny games and activities at the end of the sequence. The following are some effective instances provided by the teachers:

T1 provided an excellent example of joke to check pupils comprehension of previous lesson and at the same time to test their grammar skill; *'First , I asked them to mention one of the most outstanding figure in art (William Shakespeare) , then I asked about the past tense of William Shakespeare (Wouldiwas Shookspeared)'*.

'I usually use gesture game to introduce new words with a funny way, especially when the lesson contains some difficult vocabulary' T3.

However, a common point in all these effective instances of humor was that after these moments of humor, students laughed, the classroom atmosphere became *'less tense and more intimate'* (T1).

Among the ineffective instances of humor, was that most *'pupils did not laugh'*. In T3 words, *'I was embarrassed because most pupils didn't understand the joke; maybe the joke was related to other cultures'*.

The following are some ineffective instance of humor provided by the teachers:

- *'When I was distributing the pupils exams papers , a pupil wasn't satisfied about his mark he argued that he doesn't deserve a zero , unconsciously I told him it's the lowest mark I could give you , at that time I knew I hurt his feeling despite he was laughing and all the class'* (T1)
- *'At the end of any sequence, I usually let pupils play games. However, one time it didn't end well; the pupils were playing a dice game in which they had to find funny answers to questions. I thought it would be interesting, but students didn't understand how to play it'* (T3)

IV.2.2.1.2 Rubric two: Humor and information retention

Item eight: Teachers perceptions about humor and information retention

When asked about their perspective whether the use of humor sustains their pupil's information retention during the learning process both teachers answered by 'yes'. These are the main reasons that have been mentioned by the teachers:

- Humor increases retention of what is learned as it helps the pupils focus in the lesson
 - It motivates, relaxes and cheers up the learners (create a positive atmosphere)
 - Promote understanding and learning of a second language and enhance retention of the material.
 - Sustain attention throughout the lesson,

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- It reduces tension, increase enjoyment.
- It creates a comfortable learning environment
- Decrease stress.
- ‘Fire up their brains’

In addition to its role in creating opportunities for enhanced interpersonal interaction (teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil interactions), finally getting the pupil involved in the class activities which leads him/her to notice and learn the information easily.

Item nine: The challenges teacher faces when using humor in the classroom

In response to ‘what are the challenges teacher faces when using humor in the classroom?’ question, both teachers were of the opinion that they face problems when applying humor in the classroom. The responses given by teachers allowed us to draw a summary about the main challenges the teacher faces.

First, ‘misunderstanding’, students may misunderstand a joke just because it’s not appropriate to their age or level. Second, losing the control of the classroom and the students the moment they start laughing, Third losing self-confidence and the teacher may loses his prestige, and finally causing problems to your students (embarrassment .. etc).

On the whole, humor should be used carefully. If humor is used at the wrong time or inappropriately it may become uncontrollable and turn the class into a circus.

IV.2.2.2 Teachers who don’t use humor

The group of teachers who used no humor during their teaching process consisted of two female teachers. Their teaching experience ranged from two to four years.

IV.2.2.2.1 Rubric one: Humor and teaching

Item one: Teachers views about the use of humor in classroom

In the interview debate, the researchers asked the teachers (T2, T4) about their views concerning the use of humor in the classroom. There was a slight uncertainty in their answers; yet they see humor as an effective method. (T2) said “*Maybe it can be beneficial if this humor has something to do with the lesson, and appropriate to the student’s age and level.*” While (T4) added “*well personally, I see humor as an effective method, but only if it is relevant to the subject material*”. In sum, both teachers supported humor, however, it must relate to the topic at hand, and there should not be too much of it, otherwise it will negatively affect the pupils. That

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is to say, T2 and T4 believe that humor has its merits and demerits; yet the latter tip the scales.

Item two: Do you use humor in the classroom? Why or why not? If yes, how often do you use humor?

A notable common feature among these teachers was that when asked if they used humor in their teaching, both of them claimed that they did. (T4) answered by *'not usually'*. However (T2) said that she rarely uses humor in the classroom *'once in a blue moon'*, when we asked her about the reason she replied *"humor is not in my personality"*, she also said that 4MS pupils lack competence in L2 to create humor. Moreover T4 appeared to be blaming the formal class environment and too much burden has been put on middle school teachers, in her words *' there is no time for amusing because of the time constraints , we barely can finish the lesson in time , however, when time is on my side I integrate humor'*.

Item three: What do you think of the pupils' reaction to the use of humor in the teaching learning process?

On the whole, teachers' responses to this question revealed that the pupils were positively impacted by humor used in the classroom, (T4) claimed that *"well, learners seem to appreciate humor for its own sake even if there is only tenuous relationship to the topic"*. However, (T2) said *"Of course they will like it because they are teenagers, we should not open a window for them to derive from the lesson."* Teachers did not seem satisfied with the pupils reaction, since they are more content oriented, and they only care about the extent to which the pupils understand the lesson.

Item four: Humor types that are inappropriate in the class

In response to "Are there any types of humor you think are not appropriate in class?" question, both teachers argued that teachers should be careful if the humor is:

- Potentially offensive (sarcasm...)
- Used during times of high stress
- irrelevant to the students age and level
- not related to the subject
- related to politics, sex or race

Item five: The role of humor in foreign language teaching and improving learner's information retention

From the results of the teacher's interview about the role of humor in foreign language teaching, T2 was totally fanatic, she noted that *'I just do not believe in the*

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seriousness of humor in teaching' I can see no positive effects of humor in EFL teaching. She added that *'I'm a teacher am not an entertainer or a clown'* the implication is that *'if you are seen as a fun loving it may leads to chaos and thus you will simply lose control, your pupils attention and even your professional credibility'*. In the other hand, T4 agreed that humor is very effective and has a positive impact in the teaching-learning process because:

- It keeps students interested and motivated
- It help less sociable pupils in language classes to participate with the groups
- Getting pupils involved in class activities and holds students' attention
- It creates a relaxed and open atmosphere for language learning
- Stimulate both creative and critical thinking during a language classroom
- reduces tension and helps to decrease stress
- increase enjoyment

However, she asserted that *'only those teachers with a good classroom management and with a sense of humor can easily know when and how to use it appropriately'*.

IV.2.2.2.2 Rubric two: Humor and information retention

Item six: The role of humor in improving learner's information retention

Both teachers were quite certain to engage in this question, as they do not use humor with abundance. However, T4 argued that *' as I mentioned in the earlier question if the teacher uses humor appropriately it may benefit his/her learners positively in terms of retaining information because humorous teachers can easily grab their learners attention'*. T2 had a different opinion, she asserted that *'the use of funny materials would obstruct pupils' thinking and break down their concentration rather than facilitating their retention'*.

Item seven: The challenges a teacher may face when using humor in the classroom

Here are some of the difficulties faced by middle school teachers as they struggle to integrate humor into their classrooms:

- Some classrooms are noisy and most learners seem as if they were uninterested in what is happening in class. Such an environment is not conducive to effective learning.
- Many teachers do not feel appropriately prepared to use humor as strategy for teaching.
- Humor can be distracting
- Losing respect of your students and the control of the classroom
- Humor threat professionalism.

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In sum, even though teachers' answers in both groups were contradicted, they all claimed that they used humor in their teaching at least once. Furthermore, we can say that for humor to be effective, it should be suitable for pupils and be related to the lesson being learnt.

IV.2.3 Results from the classroom observation

In total there were two teachers observed, both of them have been teaching 4MS pupils for a minimum of four years. The reports below summarize the field notes/observation sheet from the observed lessons.

IV.2.3.1 Teacher one (T1)

The researchers observed T1 during her teaching process for one week. T1 started to review all sequence one's lessons, the lessons were particularly lively and full of laughter. She used a great deal of humor during the classes; most of them were on the lesson content in a form of jokes or humorous comments (for a minimum of four times in each session), but there were also visual humor (one time) and physical humor (three times). In the case of visual humor, T1 used funny caricatures to introduce outstanding figures and landmarks; however, physical humor was masterfully presented in a form of funny faces and physical stunts. T1 had an easy-going style of teaching, although she was quite demanding while checking pupils' comprehension of the previous lessons. Her use of humor was distributed throughout the lesson. This use of humor was welcomed by her pupils; also there was a relaxed atmosphere in class. Pupils were comfortable and accepting, yet the class discipline was still maintained and pupils still focused on the tasks at hand when signaled to do so; they did not drift away in their own enjoyment of the fun. The researchers noted in each session there were more than four times in which there was collective laughter, considered indicative of positive reactions from pupils. Concerning the pupils' understanding of the humor used, the researchers noted that T1 was eager to insert simple instances of jokes so that the pupils will not fail to catch them and/or grasp their implications.

Although the reappraisal period—which was stated by the ministry of education—was prone to be so serious and formal, the insertion of humorous jokes and comments precluded that. It seemed to help pupils view the reviewed lessons as more light-hearted and manageable.

IV.2.3.2 Teacher two (T2)

In teacher two's courses, the pupils learned a set of grammar rules (active and passive form, strong and base adjectives, present perfect...etc). In addition they also learned how to organize and write short paragraphs about famous figures and outstanding landmarks.

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Notably, there were no attempts at humor made during the observed sessions by T2. However, the researchers' overall impression was that pupils were not particularly bored with the lesson, but they were not very interested either. From the researchers' point of view T2 had a strict authoritative teaching style; she was able to change the classroom environment to fit her needs: creating a more intelligible learning experience for learners by giving them strong motivation so they realize how important leaning is. The fact that T2' teaching style focuses on technical matters seemed to limit the use of humor during the teaching learning process.

In the interview, T2 acknowledged that humor is not her personality trait; she also claimed that '*we cannot afford something that we don't possess at first place*'. This teacher's view point might explain the absence of humor in the observed sessions.

IV.3 Discussion and Interpretation of the main Results

This section is devoted to the interpretation of the main results. The analysis of the pupils' questionnaire, teachers' interview and classroom observation has disclosed important insights about teachers and pupils' attitudes toward using humor as a pedagogical strategy. The discussion is organized around the two research questions that were formed at the onset of the research:

1. How do teachers and learners perceive the use of humor in the classroom context?
2. What are the effects of teachers 'use of humor on EFL learners' information retention?

Consequently, what has been achieved from the pupils' questionnaire is that the majority of the pupils appreciate the humor integrated by their teachers, they also agreed on the positive effects of humor inside the classroom as it is used to create a relaxed and open atmosphere for language learning and this is good to help pupils more interested and focused to the subject matter, thus it increases their retention. According to Chee (2003) Humor is the characteristic that makes something laughable or amusing but humor in the English classroom has more than just the 'effect to induce laughter'; it brings together a chain reaction by increasing the learner's motivation and self-confidence which creates a positive classroom atmosphere for the smooth acquisition of the language. Furthermore, it is claimed by the pupils that humor helped them feel close to their teacher as it create a pleasant environment where bonds among teacher and pupils evolve. That is to say, humor creates friendship and "*an immediacy behavior that decreases the psychological distance between teacher and student*" (Shade, 1996, p. 105). i.e., through the use of humor, relationship of trust between

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teacher and students is reinforced.

Moreover, from the result obtained from teachers' semi-structured interview; the first bisect of the teachers agreed on the great value of using humor in the teaching learning process. Our analysis of the teachers' views (T1 and T3) indicates that teachers are mindful of the benefits resulted by integrating humor in classroom. For instance, the psychological hampers like anxiety, stress, and depression can be lowered by humor. Instead, the positive emotions such as motivation, desire, willingness and enthusiasm are boosted. They also see to recognize the effectiveness of humor on increasing learners' information retention. Csikszentmihalyi and McCormack (1995) asserted that "*if students are comfortable and enjoy the learning process, they are more likely to remember more of the material presented.*"(p.28). One may conclude from the results of the study that humor has several benefits in language learning environment, and support the hypothesis that humor integrated into the learning material beneficially impacts learning, more particularly information retention.

However, on the other hand, a very slight number of pupils and teachers (T2 and T4) seemed skeptical in the seriousness of humor. They claimed that humor can be synonymous with chaos, disturbance, time wasting and non productive. Shade (1996) claimed that the teacher with a good classroom management style and plan can help the students know what types of humor are appropriate in the classroom and what are not, as well as, when and how much is acceptable. Moreover, the results show that reasons for non-use of humor by teachers in some language classrooms predominantly revolve around the teachers' personality and their attitudes towards the humor process in teaching. According to Paterson (2005) '*if you are a teacher, you have a sense of humor .Perhaps you just need to fine-tune it, for most certainly, a sense of humor is developed, not inherited*' (p.69). Teachers mentioned that they face some obstacles when applying humor in the classroom, therefore, humor should be limited to the course objectives, teacher's knowledge on when, where and how to use humor in order to provide better results.

Regarding the results gained from classroom observation, it is necessary to mention that humor helps teacher to create a supportive easy-going learning environment. It can be used at the begging of the lesson as an icebreaker to set a soothing mood, or at the end of the lesson to rejuvenate learners after a long stressful learning. Yet, some teachers (T2 and T4) appear oblivious about the effectiveness of humor in the classroom. Finally, from the obtained results, this study revealed that instructional humor has many benefits but it is obligatory to know how to use it to achieve success in the learning process.

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IV.4 Conclusion

The current study attempted to offer further clarity to the humor-information retention hypothesis. It has developed the concept of 'Humor' and a methodology to test it, that is why this section is more practical; this chapter presents the results obtained from participating pupils through the questionnaire and participating the teachers through the interview, in addition to the results of the researchers' observation. Analyzing the data collected from these three different methods helped us to answer the following questions: is humor used by teachers in their teaching strategy? Do they know the importance of using humor in teaching? Do learners understand humor? Do they really appreciate it?

General Conclusion

General Conclusion:

General Conclusion

Learning is a complex procedure that involves much more than merely gathering factual information. FL Learners need to organize, transform and properly use the gained knowledge to make decisions, develop many various skills and function within the social environment where those skills and decisions are needed. Therefore, to acquire these abilities, good teaching methods are highly required. Humor is an unconventional strategy that meets the learning needs of FL learners and develops their creative thinking.

Admitting the positive impact of humor used in the classroom creates a big clamor in the field of education. The current study attempted to fill the gap in the research of humor in education by investigating EFL teachers' and pupils' perceptions and practices regarding humor use in EFL classrooms, and exploring ,for the first time, its effects in 4MS pupils' information retention. As well as, the preferred types of humor among teachers and pupils were considered in this research.

As indicated in General Introduction, there are two research questions in the present study:

3. What are the effects of teachers 'use of humor on EFL pupils information retention?
4. How teachers and pupils perceive the use of humor in the classroom context?

To seek answers to the latter, a concurrent mixed methods research design was used. Data was obtained from seventy student surveys, four teacher interviews, and two teacher classroom observations. The mixed method design was used to enable the triangulation of data from quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell et al., 2003; as cited in Punch, 2009).

The existing research has provided valuable insights into 4MS teachers towards the use of humor as an effective instructional strategy. Yet, the results of this study were not decisive by the teachers. Their interview results were divided in two contradictory groups; two out of four teachers (T2 & T4) clearly showed their skepticism toward using humor as a teaching strategy. They had in fact misconceptions and justifications for not inserting humor during the teaching learning process. Thus the prevailing view was that humor is unscholarly, a personality trait, unnecessary, and completely contrary to the notion of serious, classic, educational context. These attitudes are at least partially to blame for teachers' resistance to embrace humor, despite the advantages it offers. However, the results from pupils were encouraging, most of them considered humor to be more than just relaxing moments during lessons; to be more like opportunities for exposure to the language they were learning in an

General Conclusion:

authentic way, thus learning both the language and the culture it reflected. The consistency between teachers' (T1 & T3) and pupils' views was shown one more time, in conformation of the popularity of humor among the participants of this study and explanations of the high frequency of humor used by teachers. Pupils' responses also justified the high level of effectiveness that teachers attributed to their use of humor. It can be concluded that humor in this case study is an effective strategy especially in sustaining FL learners' information, and contributes to as well as emerges from the amiable relationship between teachers and pupils.

To sum up, the study strongly affirms that humor as an instructional strategy has both advantages and disadvantages and encourages teachers to use it in a well-informed manner in order to make language as interesting as it should be. Furthermore, this research can be a platform for further researches that may improve the quality of teaching in Algeria.

Limitations of the Study:

Recommendations for Further Research

In the light of the vast positive effects of humor on teaching and learning experiences, teachers should acknowledge its importance in creating a positive learning environment conducive to learning. Instead of being only a knowledge provider, he/she also should be a humanistic teacher as well. The findings of this study extend our knowledge of humor in teaching and learning in middle level education, however, to advance research on the topic of humor in language teaching, future research could be:

- ❖ The most important thing that should be known when selecting a strategy for TEFL; learners' needs should be taken into account. Wrench (2009) asserted that "*if a student's personal and interpersonal needs are not met, the academic needs may be never met*" (p.42). In other words, a strategy that never improves learners' positive emotions is ineffective and it makes the teacher fail to lead learners to a productive learning.
- ❖ In order to achieve such goals, the teacher should have the readiness to do so. This means that before applying any strategy in the classroom with his learners, he/she has to acknowledge and believe in the effectiveness of this strategy and its pedagogical outcomes.
- ❖ Concerning teacher's lack of knowledge, it's essential for teachers learn the main and appropriate types to be used in the classroom, build a database of humorous items and adjust those items to their particular needs, and lastly learn how to present humor material to others (Hativa, 2001).
- ❖ With regard to humor content based, it's essential for humor to be relevant to the subject matter. That's to say, if most or all humor used is related to the lecture topic it will be significant, and thus destruction would be avoided.
- ❖ Despite the positive points mentioned above, humor is not always advantageous during the teaching learning process. It may lead to discipline problems when it is misused.
- ❖ Future research could include participants from more culturally diverse backgrounds to provide further understanding and insights toward this issue.
- ❖ A longitudinal study to examine the development of teachers' use of humor over time in a different educational contexts (high schools, private schools, universities... etc).
- ❖ An investigation of learner-initiated humor .According to Pomerantz's and Bell's study (2011) humorous students were able to safely critique institutional and instructional norms and experiment with different identities, without negative repercussions.

Limitations of the Study:

Limitation of the study:

As any other research study, the present study has some limitations. Because of the case study approach; the first limitation was the findings of the research are limited to a small group so that generalization is difficult to be made. The inclusion of research sites and participants in different areas could have increased the generalizability of findings and the level of representation.

Second, observation is the basic of fl classroom research. The data that is collected from this procedure focuses on the frequency with which specific behaviors or types of behavior occurred in the classroom and measures their duration. The classroom observation must be reliable, but since we are dealing with middle school learners (teenagers) it's hard to know the truth from their analysis, simply because pupils may fake their attitude or they may not be sure about it.

The third limitation is the quarantine, the researchers have planned to do otherwise deeper a study unless quarantine prevented us. Causing inaccessibility to the participants, especially in the case of middle level schools learners whom are not expected to be permitted or know how to use social media to be reached out by the researchers. Furthermore, the researchers organized with the headmasters of both schools for an observation of an initial period of one month, unfortunately, with this pandemic, the researchers were able to observe the participants for only one week.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Pupil's Questionnaire:

Pupil's questionnaire:

Dear pupil,

This questionnaire is designed for the purpose of providing information concerning the effects of teacher's use of humor on EFL student's information retention. This study has been designed for 4MS pupils at Bellafdal Bayazid and Nouioui Touhami middle schools.

Data collected from this survey will be used for academic and research purposes. Your participation is completely voluntary; the questionnaire will be reported anonymously and kept strictly confidential.

You are cordially invited to take part in this research and we would be very thankful if you could answer the following questions.

Please tick (✓) the table of the statement that most closely represents your answer to the following questions.

• Gender:

Male

Female

➤ **Section one : Humor and learning :**

Question 1:

Does your teacher of English use humor in the classroom?

Never rarely sometimes often always

--	--	--	--	--

Question 2:

Do you enjoy the humor integrated in the EFL classroom?

استبيان التلميذ :

عزيزي التلميذ,

لقد تم تصميم هذا الاستبيان لغرض توفير معلومات تتعلق بموضوع اثار استخدام المعلم للفكاهة على قدرة الاحتفاظ بالمعلومات فيما يخص متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية . و قد تم تصميم هذه الدراسة خصيصا لطلاب السنة الرابعة في متوسطة بلفضل بيازيد و النويوي التهامي.

سيتم استخدام المعلومات التي يتم جمعها من هذا الاستبيان لأغراض اكاديمية و بحثية,مشاركتك ستكون اختيارية . سيتم عرض الاستبيان بشكل سري و مجهول

انت مدعو بكل مودة للمشاركة في هذا البحث. سوف نكون ممتنون

للغاية اذا تمكنت من الاجابة على الاسئلة التالية :

يرجى وضع علامة (✓) في جدول البيان الذي يمثل بشكل

وثيق اجابتك على الاسئلة التالية :

• الجنس :

ذكر

أنثى

◀ **القسم الأول : الفكاهة و التعلم :**

السؤال 1:

هل يستخدم استاذك في اللغة الإنجليزية الفكاهة في القسم ؟

أبدا نادرا أحيانا غالبا دائما

--	--	--	--	--

السؤال 2:

Appendix A: Pupil's Questionnaire:

Yes

No

Question 3:

Does humor help in your process of learning in the classroom?

Agree Neutral Disagree

--	--	--

Question4:

Which form of humor do you prefer ?

Jokes Puns Riddles

--	--	--

Others

.....

.....

Question5:

Can you provide on brief example of humor or jokes used by your teacher?

.....

.....

.....

هل تستمتع بالفكاهة المدمجة في حصص اللغة الإنجليزية ؟

نعم

لا

السؤال 3:

هل تساعدك الفكاهة في عملية التعلم داخل القسم ؟

أوافق محايد لا أوافق

--	--	--

السؤال 4:

أي نوع من الفكاهة تفضل

نكت أحجيات ألغاز

--	--	--

أنواع أخرى

.....

.....

.....

السؤال 5 :

هل يمكنك ان تعطي مثلا موجزا عن الفكاهة أو النكت التي

يستخدمها معلمك؟

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Appendix A: Pupil's Questionnaire:

➤ Section two: Humor and information retention:

Question 1:

Does humor increase your information retention ability?

Yes

No

Question 2:

How humorous teacher can influence the pupil's information retention?

.....

.....

Question 3:

Does the use of humor affect EFL learners' information retention positively or negatively?

Explain?

.....

.....

Question 4:

What are the challenges a learner may face when integrating humor in the learning process?

.....

.....

.....

القسم الثاني : الفكاهة و استرجاع المعلومات :

السؤال 1 :

هل تساعدك الفكاهة على تطوير قدرتك في استرجاع المعلومات ؟

نعم

لا

السؤال 2 :

كيف يمكن للمعلم الفكاهي ان يؤثر على قدرة التلميذ بالاحتفاظ بالمعلومات ؟

.....

.....

السؤال 3 :

هل يؤثر استخدام الفكاهة على متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية سلبيا أو إيجابيا ؟ علل إجابتك

.....

.....

السؤال 4 :

ماهي التحديات التي من الممكن ان يواجهها التلميذ عند دمج الفكاهة في عملية التعلم ؟

.....

.....

.....

Appendix B: Teacher's Interview:

The Semi Structured Interview's Questions:

Rubric one: Humor and learning:

During your career as an EFL teacher at Bellafdhah Ba Yazid / Nououi Touhami Middle School:

1. How do you see the use of humor in classroom? For both teachers
2. Do you use humor in the classroom? Why or why not? If yes, how often do you use humor?
3. In general, how effective did you find your lesson as you embedded humor in the teaching learning process?
4. What do you think of the pupils' reaction to your use of humor in the teaching learning process?
5. In general, is your use of humor in class prepared or spontaneous? Please explain your preference.
6. Do you think that humor can be beneficial to your lesson and your teaching? Why or why not?
7. Please tell me about one instance in which you used humor effectively [to enhance the lesson quality, to increase pupil's participation, to break classroom boredom, to increase pupils' attention, etc.]
8. Please tell me about one instance in which you used humor not so effectively. What do you think was the reason(s) for that failure?
9. Are there any types of humor you think are not appropriate in class?
10. What type(s) of humor do you prefer to use in class? Please explain your choice(s).

Rubric Two: Humor and Information Retention

11. Do you think that the use of humor sustains pupils information retention during the learning process?
12. What do you think about the role(s) and/ or effect(s) of humor in foreign language teaching?
13. What are the challenges teacher faces when using humor in the classroom?

Appendix C: Transcript of a Teacher Interview:

TRANSCRIPT OF A TEACHER INTERVIEW

Teacher who used humor: (T1)

Rubric one: Humor and teaching

During your career as an EFL teacher at Bellafdhak Ba Yazid Middle School:

1. How do you see the use of humor in classroom?

'humor is a valuable effective teaching tool that encourages a good atmosphere for learning which establishes and maintains relationships between the teacher and the student.'

2. Do you use humor in the classroom? If yes, how often do you use humor?

'Actually it depends on the lesson, but usually I use humor as a warming up, it can be a joke or a funny face right at the beginning of the lesson to set an easygoing mood for the lesson.'

• **Why?**

'Actually I use humor in my class because the shortest distance between two people is a smile and sharing laughter after telling a joke to pupil's shows that we really care about them.'

3. In general, is your use of humor in class prepared or spontaneous?

"Well most of time it is prepared this is to avoid misunderstanding"

• **Please explain your preference.**

"Because we intend to use it in order to break the ice at the beginning so the pupils feel more comfortable and open to learning. Humor can also be spontaneous in unexpected situations where a student asks an unexpected question"

4. What type(s) of humor do you prefer to use in class?

"Usually I use a mixture between jokes, funny stories, singing, dancing...etc"

5. Are there any types of humor you think are not appropriate in class?

'Teachers should avoid sarcasm; making fun of someone is not cool at all, in addition to some kinds of jokes like those related sex and race'.

6. In general, how effective did you find your lesson as you embedded humor in the teaching learning process?

'every time I use humor to explain points that are difficult to understand, my pupils become more interested and they can easily grasp the presented lesson'.

7. Please tell me about one instance in which you used humor effectively

'I usually use gesture game to introduce new words with a funny way, especially when the lesson contains some difficult vocabulary'

Appendix C: Transcript of a Teacher Interview:

- 8. Please tell me about one instance in which you used humor not so effectively. What do you think was the reason(s) for that failure?**

‘When I was distributing the pupils exams papers , a pupil wasn’t satisfied about his mark he argued that he doesn’t deserve a zero , unconsciously I told him it’s the lowest mark I could give you , at that time I knew I hurt his feeling despite he was laughing and all the class’

Rubric two: Humor and information retention

- 9. Do you think that the use of humor sustains pupils’ information retention during the learning process?**

“yes I do think that humor sustain pupils information retention, because humor increases retention of what is learned as it helps the pupils focus in the lesson, motivates, relaxes and cheers up the learners In addition to its role in creating opportunities for enhanced interpersonal interaction”

- 10. What are the challenges teacher faces when using humor in the classroom?**

“Well I faced a lot of challenges when using humor one of these challenges is misunderstanding, students may misunderstand a joke just because it’s not appropriate to their age or level”

Appendix D: Observation Sheet:

Observation Sheet:

Check List:

Date :

School :

Name of the teacher :

Subject observed :

Teachers use of humor:

Type of humor	joke	riddle	pun	others

Materials used	Visual humor	Physical humor

Classroom interaction	Positive	Neutral	Negative

Students reaction:

Time	Positive	Neutral	Negative
8_9			

Student's understanding of humor:

Level	Excellent	Good	Average	poor

Appendix E: Information Sheet:

Information sheet:

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the aim of our project?

The research project aims at exploring how lecturers use humor in their teaching, what lecturers think the purposes of humor in teaching precisely, its effect on sustaining and increasing the pupils information retention, and what are pupils perceptions about humor.

What Types of Participants are being sought?

Teachers and 4MS pupils from Bellafdhah Ba yazid and Nouioui Touhami middle schools are invited to participate in this study. Approximately two teachers of English subject and seventy pupils will be involved in this research project. The result of this research project will be supplied to you upon request.

What will Participants be asked to do?

If you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to: Teachers will allow the researcher to interview them .As for pupils, they will be asked for their sincere cooperation to answer our questionnaire.

What Data or Information will be collected and what use will be made of it?

Data collection for this project includes: 1) the interviews of teachers .2) The pupils answers to our questionnaire 3) The observation of teachers will be held with the permission of the teacher per-se. Recorded data will be managed, transcribed and studied only by the researchers whose names are shown below. Participants' confidentiality will be protected. Personal information will not be collected. Any information that may identify the participants will not be disclosed. The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it.

I agree to take part in this project

..... (Signature of the participant)

..... (Date)

Name of the researcher :

Ms. Douniazad SLIMANI

Ms. Imen ZOGHLAMI

Email of the researcher:

douniazad216@gmail.com

zoghلاميimene71@gamil.com

ملخص :

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقق من حالة الفكاهة في البرنامج الجزائري لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في المرحلة المتوسطة وتؤكد على أهمية الفكاهة في عملية تعليم / تعلم اللغة أولاً، تم فحص آراء المعلم واستيعابه فيما يتعلق بأهمية دمج الفكاهة كإستراتيجية تعليمية في عملية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية ومع ذلك، تم البحث عن أسباب عدم استخدام الفكاهة في السياقات الأكاديمية. لمعالجة هذه الفجوة، تم ذكر أسباب تجنب المدرسين لاستخدام الفكاهة. ثانياً، تم فحص موقف المتعلمين تجاه الدعابة كإستراتيجية تعليمية وكيف يمكن أن يؤثر على الاحتفاظ بمعلومات متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. من أجل الحصول على فهم أعمق لهذا الموضوع ، استخدمت تصاميم أساليب مختلفة ومتزامنة. استخدم الباحثون ثلاثة طرق لجمع البيانات 4 مقابلات مع المعلمين 70 استبياناً للتلاميذ والملاحظة داخل القسم. أشارت النتائج إلى أن غالبية المعلمين اعتبروا أن الدرس كان فعالاً عندما جسّدوا فيه روح الدعابة، بناءً على ضحك التلاميذ وانتباههم ومشاركتهم، و من حيث حصول التلاميذ على النقاط الأساسية للدرس بشكل أسهل. الغالبية العظمى من الطلاب (85٪) يوافقون بشدة أن الفكاهة تساعدهم على الاحتفاظ بالمعلومات بسهولة. بشكل عام ، كشفت النتائج عن تأكيد الفرضيتين ؛ يؤدي الاستخدام الفعال للفكاهة في الفصل الدراسي إلى زيادة الاحتفاظ بمعلومات تلاميذ اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية والمحافظة عليها، كما يؤدي إلى توفير جو فعال يساعد على التعلم. ومع ذلك ، يجب أن يحرص المعلمون على عدم استخدام الفكاهة غير اللائقة التي يمكن أن تكون مسيئة أو على حساب المتعلم، لأنها تؤدي أحياناً إلى مشاكل في الانضباط ، وهذا يتطلب معرفة ماذا ومتى وكيف يتم استخدامها. وعليه، ينتهي هذا العمل ببعض الاقتراحات والتوصيات التي من شأنها تحسين بيئة التعلم والتعليم في المدرسة المتوسطة الجزائرية.