

A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF HUMOR IN TEACHING ESL AMONG ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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“Because I know that a good laugh eases tension, increases creativity, ... I will do almost anything to get the class rolling with laughter — voice inflections, exaggerated facial expressions and movements, hilarious personal stories (of which I have way too many), ridiculous examples...and I encourage my students to do the same.” — Kaywin Cottle, Speech Communications teacher (NEA Facebook)

ABSTRACT

There are some techniques, methods and skills in teaching in order to encourage, enhance and motivate the students. In this study, the aim was to explore the effects on students' academic performance and their inducement. The study was designed as the true-experimental research on selected batches to whom the researcher teaches. The students were B. Tech- Sem-I of an engineering college, Hyderabad Institute of Technology and Management, Hyderabad. The researcher selected – AI&ML (60), Cyber Security (46), Mechanical (23) & 9 faculty of English. A questionnaire was shared to all 138 students & faculty through Google forms to know their opinions and its effect on their learning skills and inspiration. Along with this, a class with humor was conducted to observe the difference of with or without. The finding showed a large number of students assent of using humor because it makes learning more enjoyable and innovative.

Keywords- *Humor, language learning, motivation, Self-esteem.*

INTRODUCTION

There are some techniques, methods and skills in teaching in order to encourage, enhance and motivate the students. In this study, the aim is to explore the effects on students' academic performance and their inducement. Humor is considered as a therapy among people to get relaxed environment. It is a misunderstanding that humor spoil the sincerity and seriousness among students towards their study. It is underrated attribute used in teaching and learning. The transformation in the medium of research and teaching-learning method has emerged due to Covid-19. The process of learning and imparting knowledge has adopted its virtual platform. Most of the times, the teacher cannot be assured that the students are listening him or not. Humor helps the shy students to come out from their shell of silence, hesitation and to involve in classroom's activity or interaction. The virtual platform has made it more difficult to assume the body language and expression of students. Though, these two, the body language and expression are considered as essential components in communication skills. Second language can be incorporated through all four communication skills as verbal or non-verbal humor (Morrison)

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To discuss the role of humor as teaching technique in teaching -learning.
- To understand learners' opinions on the usage of humor?
- To memorize learners' opinions on their teacher's usage of humor?
- To determine the teacher's awareness how humor can be used to improve ESL (English as second language)?
- Do the students have knowledge that humor can trigger their skills in building up vocabulary easily while using humor in teaching process?
- Does the teacher actually use humor in their lessons of English language?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant because it will engage in genuinely original research into an area of using humor in teaching. In HITAM (Hyderabad Institute of Technology and Management), an

engineering college which has received comparatively little scholarly attention. This study is also useful for prospective teachers how humor can be used as an effective tool in effective teaching-learning. It will generate an awareness among teachers and students on the use of humor and create a comfortable environment with the sense of interest and better comprehension towards English language learning. Through using humor, a teacher gets students' attention and make learning more interesting and enjoyable.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

What is Humor?

Humor often occurs in classroom during teaching process. According to *Cambridge dictionary*, "the ability to find things funny, the way in which people see that some things are funny, or the quality of being funny." Cook Guy, in his book *Language Play, Language Learning* has emphasized the playful nature of language usage. Further he argued how the exploitation of pattern and format follows 'creativity and adaptability'. Hereafter, in order to make create an understanding of the similarities in three different genres, he has provided the characteristics of language at each level;

Linguistic Form	(L1) patterning of forms (rhythms, phonological, and grammatical parallels)
	(L2) emphasis on exact wording
	(L3) repetition (both of parts and of whole texts)
Semantics	(S1) indeterminate meaning (foreign or archaic language, unknown obscure words, ambiguities)
	(S2) vital or important subject-matter (birth, death, sexual relations, health, etc.)
	(S3) reference to an alternative reality
	(S4) inversion of language/reality relation
Pragmatics	(P1) focus upon performance and upon the speaker and/or writer
	(P2) use in congregation and/or intimate interaction
	(P3) creation of solidarity and/or antagonism and competition
	(P4) no direct usefulness
	(P5) preservation or inversion of the social order.

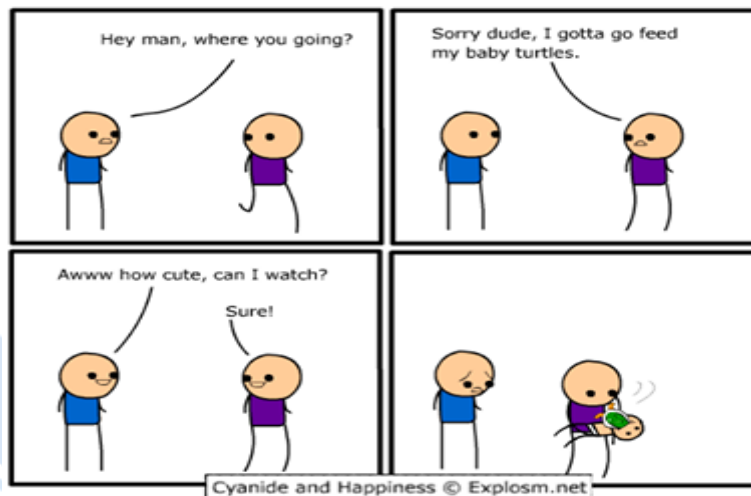
(P6) enjoyment and/or value

LITERATURE REVIEW

Humor is the result of verbal or non-verbal speech. Humor is a kind of contribution of teacher's competence to improve teaching and learning process. So far, it has not been analysed yet how humor can be used in classroom and the effects of humor on students' grammar performance and their confidence in communication. According to Tamblyn (2003), being a teacher, you should create some situation or states of curiosity, attention, confidence and active leaning as students need. Using humor in appropriate way is the easiest way to make your teaching as an active learning. In his *Professors are from Mars, Students are from Snickers: How to Write and Deliver Humor in the Classroom and in Professional Presentations*, Berk has emphasized various benefits of using humor as an effective teaching tool to increase the cognitive skills, to enhance their productivity skills and concentrations. S W Rareshide in his article, "Implications for Teachers' Use of Humor in the Classroom" Humor makes for a more relaxed atmosphere, which I am comfortable in. So, it helps the teacher, as well as the students, when humor is incorporated into the lesson. His survey from fifth and six grade teachers shows that humor is an integral part of teaching. It is found in his guidelines that only one minute of humor can make the classroom a happier and comfortable place for all students. Ali Ziyaeemehr, in his article "Use and Non-Use of Humor in Academic ESL Classroom" has defined humor as socio-linguistic and cultural phenomenon. It leads to improve vocabulary, distinguish between literary and figurative meaning of the sentences. It boosts up their memory to keep remember for longer period and encourage their skills to sort out linguistics problems.

According to Deneire, Humor can be used as a tool to incorporate intercultural communication among students. Hereafter, he emphasized the different theories of language learning such as sexual humor 'naturally excluded from the classroom for both psychological' and social reasons., ethnic jokes related to the beliefs of a community or group, intercultural jokes 'have little or no

cultural validity appears from the fact that they can easily be inverted' and political jokes. Canale and Swain, in 1980 and 1983, suggested a structure of the communicative language teaching theory while containing four skills; linguistic, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse skill. Linguistic skills denote to the knowledge of decoding the content or illustration in narration. For instance, Teacher: Billy, if you had two dollars in one pocket and five dollars in another, what would you have? Billy: Someone else's pants, ma'am. (Vega 1989: 61)



Socio-linguistic refers the usage of language in social context. In other way, it also shows an inappropriate use of language in the terms of meaning and form. For example,



Source: Googleimage.com

And, Discourse competence is the ability of the listener to understand the language, interpret and express that in given language.

Advantages of Humor in learning: There are several advantages of humor in different aspects. Some of them are following-

It promotes students' creativity level.

It enhances student's attitude and interest towards subject and teacher.

It generates positive environment of the classroom.

It helps to improve the student's academic performance and attendance.

It improves student's listening and cognitive skills.

It breaks down the barriers of communication between an instructor and students.

It makes teaching more delightful and reinforce students' holistic development.

It helps to boost up their confidence level while reducing self-consciousness.

Social benefits/ theory

It improves their pleasant interaction in society and encourage their social value and behaviour.

Psychological benefits/-

It reduces anxiety among students.

It enhances their mental health and well-being with positive attitude. That leads to good health.

Instructional benefits

It helps to understand any concept easily and build up motivation.

DATA RESOURCES

The study was designed as the true-experimental research on selected batches to whom the researcher teaches. The students were B. Tech- Sem-I of an engineering college, Hyderabad Institute of Technology and Management, Hyderabad. The researcher selected – AI&ML (60), Cyber Security (46) & Mechanical (23). A questionnaire was shared to all 129 students & faculty through Google forms to know their opinions and its effect on their learning skills and inspiration. The finding showed a large number of students assent of using humor because it makes learning more enjoyable and innovative.

Table.1

	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I feel humor is important for my learning	0.7	0.7	21	26.8	50.7
2	I am comfortable in a class where humor is incorporated	3.6	11.6	28.3	28.3	28.3
3	I feel less stress and anxiety when I laugh.	4.3	2.2	7.2	23.9	62.3
4	My teacher does surprising things that make us laugh	2.9	4.3	25.4	34.1	33.3
5	When a teacher uses humor, I like the teacher more.	0.7	3.6	15.9	29	50.7
6	When a teacher uses humor, I like the subject more.	0.7	7.2	10.1	26.8	55.1
7	When humor is used to teach the material, I am able to remember it better.	0.0	4.3	18.8	23.9	52.9
+8	Do you feel that humor generally improves your ability to learn a language in the classroom by creating a more comfortable and conducive learning environment overall?	0.0	1.4	15.2	29.0	54.3
9	How often does your instructor use actual words and/or other elements of a humorous	2.9	2.9	39.9	29.7	24.6

	example in the foreign language (i.e., a joke, pun, comic strip, funny story, etc.) to illustrate grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, or any other particularity of the language during a typical class?					
10	To what degree does humor in the foreign language increase your interest in learning that language?	0.7	1.04	31.9	39.9	26.1
11	I will work hard for a teacher who teaches me language with humor and make me laugh	5.9	5.9	15.4	37.5	35.3

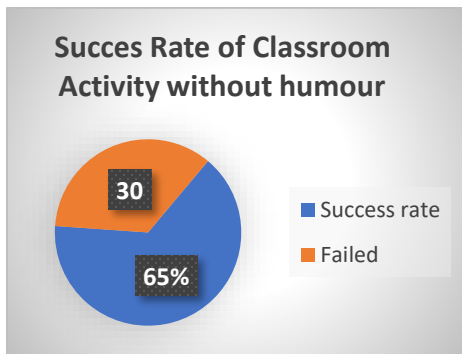


Fig. 1



Fig.2

Findings: In this study, findings showed that teaching without humor is tedious for the students. As it is shown from the survey that humor as a best method for keeping students focused on the class. The usage of humor improves not only the class environment along with the performance of students. Through the questionnaire survey, students also do agree that humor is necessary in learning and for academic growth. After conducted humor-oriented class, these are the following interesting findings reflected:

1. Students enthusiastically and actively attended the class. (Fig 1 &2, for reference)
2. The graph of absentees decreased.
3. The academic performance of students also increased.
4. There was a rapid improvement in students' motivation and achievements.

Through these above pie charts, we have experienced the impact of humour in our classroom. This study has validated that without usage of humor in teaching-learning process, we may limit the learners to adopt linguistics and cultural competences. The appropriate use of humor through verbal language can improve learning of a second language.

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APPENDIX 1

Instruction: Please, kindly fill the questionnaire completely by ticking the space you select for each number Agree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

- 1) Humor reduces tension. Yes/ No
- 2) Humor bridges gap between teachers and students. i.e. it makes teachers more approachable in classes. Yes/ No
- 3) Humor makes the class interesting. Yes/ No
- 4) Humor encourages the students' attendance in classes. Yes/ No
- 5) Improves your ability to learn a language in the classroom. Yes/ No
- 6) Do you understand humor used in teaching of EFL? Yes/ No
- 7) Do you recommend the use of humor in the teaching of ESL: Yes/ No
- 8) Do you understand humor in first language than English Language? Yes/ No
- 9) Do you think that humor in EFL can lead to A) Disrespect B) Withdrawal on the part of students. Yes/ No
- 10) Do you think that humor is a waste of precious learning time in the classroom. Yes/ No