

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter will discuss the various theories about humor from various studies in the literature review. It consist of definition of humor, humor in education, types of humor in education, humor in English as a foreign language (EFL) class, benefit of humor , and guidelines for using humor. Then the second part is conceptual framework.

#### **Defining ‘Humor’**

Humor is a phenomenon that is commonly found in the community. Humor is a one aspect of socialization in our daily life and it is a common fact that all human beings naturally contribute in humorous verbal communication and performance. As said by Schmitz (2002) actually, humor is part of social gatherings, which it is strongly associated with human nature. According to Baldwin (2007) “humor is a social instrument that provides an effective way to reduce psychological distress, communicate a range of feeling and ideas, and enhance relationship; also humor protect social relationship when communicating negative information”. In the second edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED2) (1989) humor is “that quality of action, speech, or writing, which excites amusement; oddity, jocularly, facetiousness, comicality, fun” (p. 486). Martin (2001) also said, that in general terms, humor can be described as a funny thing that carried out by someone to make other people laugh or sense of amusement to those who hear or see it. Those definitions are very general and broad. Actually,

the definition of humor is very complex. It is because there are differences between cultures, regions or countries, and also differences between individuals and media to deliver humor itself.

In the western community, since the era of Plato and Aristotle, humor was become something valuable. Grant as cited in Jiang and Yue (2011) believe that humor is a natural expression, which it creates a positive emotion for people such as enjoyment, amusement, and pleasure. American participants have been found more prefer to aggressive humor than Hong Kongese participants (Castell & Goldstein, 1977). Then, Martin (2004) found that men are significantly more likely to prefer aggressive humor than women.

Therefore, humor could be concluded as everything that people say or do to convey a funny things that it can make other people will be fun. Everyone must have a sense of humor, the differences is only at the level of the sense of humor itself. Even though, humor has differences between individuals, cultures, countries, or mediums. However, it always has the same goal of creating a pleasant atmosphere or can make others amused.

### **Humor in education**

Humor is also seen a positive thing when applied in the classroom. This is evidenced by the numerous studies on the use humor in the classroom. Both the correlation survey studied Wanzer and Frymier (1999) and experimental studies Martin et al (2006) has exposed that teachers' humor can increase the learning. Humor is a precious teaching tool for building a classroom conducive to learning (Kher, Molstad, & Donahue, 1999).

There are some students' perceptions of teacher that students believe the best teachers are the ones who apply humor in their teaching (Forston & Brown, 1998). Student in the study by Bryant, Chomsky, Crane, and Zilmann (1980) more incline to see male professor who used humor often as a better teacher than the teachers who did use humor, while a small amount of female instructors who often used humor was accepting lower effectiveness ratings. The teacher who applies successful humor into their teaching material and their interactions can creates heartening communication atmosphere, increase attention and processing information, and eventually facilitate students' learning (Goodboy, Butterfield, Balkon, & Griffin, 2015). This may occur because when the teachers use successful humor, students will be enjoying their educational experience and learn more. Martin (2007) noted, "students are more likely to learn if they are happy and amused than if they are feeling anxious and threatened" (p. 350). Another study, that by Garner (2006), also reports results that students denote that humor can increase their readability in learning, and research has proved that students who have teacher with robust humor orientation incline to learn more. The teachers who use humor are seen as fun, amusing, caring (Forston & Brown, 1998), charismatic and intellectually inspiring (Balkon & Goodboy, 2011).

In conclusion, humor is an effective tool in interpersonal communication skills. Those tools can be effectively applied when students feel relaxed or non-threatened. Humor in the classroom is not the answer to all the problems of classroom management, but it is an excellent deterrent measure and often can melt a tense situation (Kher, Molstad, & Donahue, 1999).

### **Types of humor in education**

There are many different researchers have classified humor in a variety of ways. These are based on one or more of features of humor, such as subject (who or what shows humor. For example, the teacher or the students), types (ways or means to show humor, for example, jokes, body language), connection, and degree of preparation. Some researchers identified the humor classifications before doing research and collecting data.

Bryant et al as cited in Banas, Dunbar, Rodriguez, and Liu (2011) classified humor into humorous comments (a short statement with humor), funny stories (a fairy tale related with an event or incident), jokes or riddle (make something to build-up humor), puns (words or phrases that structurally and phonetically have two or more meanings which used to play the multiple meaning), and visual humor (conveying a sense of humor with cartoons, comic, picture, etc.).

While, Wanzer et al as cited in Banas et al (2011) explained the classified humor as seeking funny others (make others to create humor), humor unrelated to class material (all the forms of humor in the classroom is not related to the subject material), low humor (In the certain situation act silly or stupid), Impersonation (say something to imitate the sound of famous people with certain characters), language and word play (using slang language to make humorous communication), nonverbal humor (to make humorous atmosphere using body language or gestures or funny expression), laughing (laugh to provoke others laughed), and using funny props (use funny tool as a media to make something funny).

Regardless of the types mentioned above, there are several other types; Martin (2007) identified one of types is unplanned humor (humor shown is fortuitous, occurs spontaneously), another types is self-disparaging humor (make yourself as a target or a means to convey humor) (Wanzer, frymier, Wojtaszczyk, & Smith, 2006), additional classification types from Frymier, Wanzer and Wojtaszczyk (2008) is offensive humor (humor build upon culture humor, race humor, and sex humor) and humor related to class material (all the forms of humor in the classroom is related to the subject material) (Wanzer, Fyymier, Wojtaszczyk, & Smith, 2006).

### **Humor in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Class**

Most of research on humor in education that has been done so far only focuses on primary education. A study mentioned that there was a deficiency related to language classes; Medgyes (2001) in his statement said “English lesson is the right area that more need of laugh than any other subjects” (p. 111). Therefore, teacher who uses humor in EFL class, perhaps in terms of form, content, strategies, and implementing purposes are different from the general education.

From a limited number of studies about the use of humor in language learning apart of the benefits that already mentioned on researches in other field of education, there are several studies that have examined the use of humor in EFL/ESL class. Motlagh, Motallebzade and Fatemi (2014) in their research about applying humor in EFL classroom has a positive correlations. It is proven that there is the positive influence of the using humor on EFL students’ reading

comprehension. Teachers' humor in EFL class can be an effective language learning tool in EFL contexts (Forston & Brown, 1998). Humor which used in EFL classroom was found to have the effect of reducing anxiety about foreign language lessons includes improving student assessment in the learning process. It also affects the changing role of teacher and students; reduce the social distance and freeing someone to talk (Forman, 2011). Humors in language learning are able to increase students' consciousness of language forms (Lucas, 2005), encourage the use of language skills with a creative way, offer cognitive excitement (Forman, 2011), and increase vocabulary, fluency, and understanding the structure of English language (Deneire, 1995). Another study, by Krashen (1982), also reported that "humor can also improve the classroom atmosphere particularly for students who are worried about making mistakes or nervous about their speaking abilities. However, it is very important that we learn with our students to laugh 'about' mistakes rather than at the people who make them".

Humor is one of strategies to reduce students' anxiety, which has been investigated as one of the requirements to facilitate the learning to be successful. Teachers who use humor needs to seek or obtain the reference of theoretical humor in education, especially in EFL class.

### **Benefit of humor**

Humor is an aspect of society which can't be released. We can find it in everywhere and anytime, for example in the office, in the home, even in the classroom. The increasing use of humor in the community, making humor is something interesting to be used as research material in various spheres of life.

So, the benefits of humor can categorize into psychological, physiological, and sociological.

**Psychological benefit of humor.** There are many psychological benefit of humor are supported by several theories. Martin (1988) in his study said that use appropriate humor can reduce stress or depression, anxiety, fear, and anger. Other theories from Colom Alcover, Curto, and Osuna (2011) also said humor is able to mitigate anxiety and stress. Cornett (1986) psychological benefit of humor is to improve self-confidence and self-esteem. Humor can increase motivation (Cornett, 1986). Therefore, humor can be a way to solve problem in the reality in various emotions, especially in terms of negative emotions. Humor can improve human mood and assist to avoid mental illness (Colom, Alcover, Curto, & Osuna, 2011).

**Physiological benefit of humor.** Aside from the psychological benefit of humor, in particular conditions may physiological treatment. Numerous studies have confirmed that humor produce healthy psychological changes. Cornett (1986) stated that laughter from humor can increase oxygen in blood, increased production of natural painkillers in the body systems, muscles, diaphragm, and exercising of lungs. Humor can positively keep the respiratory system by reducing the effect of bronchial asthma and increase the immune system by increasing the expenditure of energy (Tan & Schneider, 2009; Wilkins & Eisenbranum, 2009). Martin (2001) was dividing four points of mechanism the use of humor may give impact toward physical health. First, in the body system such as circulating catecholamine and cortisol levels, reduce muscle tension or relax the muscle,

increased oxygen in blood, increase breathing, exercising of heart, increase endorphin production, etc. Second, humor that creates a positive emotional can sway health; reduce the pain and increase the immunity. Third, humor can reduce stress that arising from the problem in life. Because stress can be cause disease in the body, for example increasing risk of infectious sickness, heart disease, and press the immune system. The last, humor can act as an intermediary by social support, it can be beneficial for health indirectly.

**Sociological benefit of humor.** It is considerably known that the humorous is often considered more cheerful and more popular (Morrison, 2008). Social theory of humor explained humor is good means to build better group interaction and transmission of cultural mores (Coleman, 1992). Laughing together is a pleasant experience; sharing humor will increase positive emotions toward other members of the group. One of the main functions of the school is a place to socialize; conform to the knowledge, understanding, etc. Socialization process involves learning how to adapt themselves to others, and face a life which full of challenges. Students learn it values by using humor as a tool for socialization. Humor can be used as a power tool to improve the relationship between group members; sharing experiences and improving group compactness (Steele, 1998). Humor can ease a stained situation, it becomes tool to help to express animadversion in a way that is less serious and non-endangering. Morrison (2008) also included where humor can assist in various situations; announced the bad news, criticizing management, express regret, conflict resolution, etc.



In the conclusion, from the explanation above research in various disciplines have shown that humor is beneficial for someone whether it is for the body, mind, and relationship.

### **Guidelines for using humor**

Humor can be a great way to break up monotony, put students at comfort and establish a bond. When EFL teachers can use humor appropriately, it can allow students to observe a different aspect of the language they are working so hard to understand. There are a number of issues about using humor in the classroom. Humor in the classroom is a controversial and complex topic. Some teachers consider humor is one of the important things in their teaching. There are a number of guidelines which they should consider before using humor effectively.

Stephen (1993) said that the most important thing from guidelines of using humor for the teachers is humor should not be used to harm, embarrass, or ridicule students. The guidelines that teachers should consider are first, teachers must realize and accept that humor has many uses. Second, humor should not be used to harm, embarrass, or ridicule students. Third, humor has a specific purpose, even if the humor is used spontaneously. Fourth, humor must be applied in accordance with the level of students' ability. Fifth, teachers should combine both humor in their teaching; using spontaneous humor and planned humor. Sixth, sometimes teachers have to laugh at themselves to exhibit their students that they are "human". Seventh, teacher can use sarcasm (satire or criticism subtly) only if it is kind of playfulness.

Chiasson (2002) also mentions some guidelines for using humor in the classroom. First, the teacher should not force humor or try too hard; teacher should make humor comes naturally. Second, teacher gives humor according to teachers' personality. The teacher should not be force making humor because it may not work. Third, the teacher should not use private humor (humor which was understandable only the members of an in group, that is, people who are in a particular social group. humor was understandable only to those who are aware of the circumstances behind it). Fourth, teacher makes humor as a part of class, so the teacher should be careful not to use excessive humor. Fifth, humor in the classroom should be related to teacher's activities, for example humor used to develop student's vocabulary or to persuade conversation. The last, humor should be clear and interrelated between the theme and student.

Stroud (2013) in his study suggested ten guidelines that should be taken by teacher to use humor effectively on the classroom learning. First, use humor into your own way. For example, the teacher using a joke or a funny movement to interacts with students. Second, apply humor as material and visual teaching in the learning classroom. For example, teacher can using picture or video that makes students laugh. Third, boost students' humor, but gives students the decision whether to use humor or not. Fifth, develop classroom rules relating to the use of humor and explain your expectations on the students' behavior during learning in the classroom. Sixth, recognize when students are not comfortable with using humor in the classroom and purpose alternatives way in their learning. Seventh, give students the language and knowledge obligatory to be funny in L2. Eighth,

give positive feedback or provide a score for humor usage by students. Ninth, acquire feedback from classes to make sure that humor is having a positive result on learning. The last, creating teachers' humor version because a teacher who enjoyed her own classes is more tend to spread motivation to their students.

Those explanation above shows there are several steps or guidelines recommended to ensuring that humor can be used as a positive influence on classroom learning.

### **Review of Related Research**

In this part, the researcher will show the reviews of two previous research which have been conducted by other researchers. One of the researchers was conducted by Makewa (2011) entitled "Teachers' use of humor in teaching and students' rating of their effectiveness". The research design employed was quantitative research. The target population of this study comprised of all teachers and students of secondary schools in Migori district, Kenya, with the sample size consisting of six schools in Migori district. The questionnaire was used as the main instrument for data collection. The result of this study showed that the use of humor in teaching is good and students appreciate it because they have rated the teachers as either good or very good at motivating them, reducing their anxiety in the classroom, stimulating their thoughts and interest as well as fostering a positive relationship between them and the teachers. With the use of humor, which is then related to the teachers' effectiveness in teaching, the students are generally expected to do well in the subsequent subjects. This is because they are motivated; they find the lessons engaging; their anxiety about the subjects is

reduced; their thoughts and interests are stimulated and their relationship with the teachers is positive. The teachers who use humor in teaching tend to be rated moderately high in terms of boosting motivation of the students, reducing of their anxieties in the classroom, stimulating of their thoughts and interest and fostering of a positive relationship between them and the teachers, which generates an effective learning.

Second related study is written by Ali, Iqbal, Ali, Uddin, and Rahman (2015) entitled “Appropriate use of humor in English language teaching: a case study of KUST (Kohat University of Science and Technology), Kohat (a city in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan)”. They tried to identify the pitfalls involved in using humour, to recommend the appropriate use of humour in a language class, to make English teaching and learning easy, quick and effective through the use of humour, and to promote the use of English language in Pakistan. This research used qualitative research design. This research was conducted involving 45 students and 11 teachers of the English department of Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat, by using a questionnaire employing Likert-scale. The questionnaire for the students as well as for the teachers comprised of 20 questions. The result of this study showed that students and teachers prefer to use a great deal of humor. Although the use of humor is used properly and contextualizedly, the teachers, however, fail to identify the limitation of humor as expected by the students. Most teachers do not target themselves for humor but rather direct their humor in majority of cases towards a specific individual which can be very dangerous. The worst part of it is that a

large chunk of their humor is based on, opinions, appearance, behavior, get up or lack of intelligence of students. Teachers' use of humor is for the sake of humor itself and barely used for educational purposes as they use humor just to keep students laugh at one another. Therefore, the relevancy of humor to the subject is unfortunately lacking.

Based on the explanation above, there is the different views about the effects of humor. The first study shows that humor gives the positive effect on the learning process for students; humor was identified as the method that students need in their learning process. Meanwhile, in the second study, humor was identified as a less important method in the learning process. The result shows that humor gives the negative effect on the learning process for students because teachers' use of humor is for the sake of humor itself and barely used for educational purposes as they use humor just to keep students laugh at one another. In this current research, it is expected to know the effects of humor, both positive and negative. Furthermore, the researcher wants to know the extent to which the lecturers use class humor; situations that make teachers use humor in the teaching process.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Teaching and learning processes are actions to achieve the purposes in education. A teacher can do various methods, for example, using humor in order to improve their teaching and learning process. Ali, Iqbal, Ali, Uddin, and Rahman (2015) argued that "Humour can have direct effect on learning and

information retention and indirect effect on the general classroom environment in terms of the affective nature of humour on the learning process” (p. 127).

Humor can provide some benefits. Martin (1988) in his study said that psychological benefit of humor use are reduce stress or depression, anxiety, fear, and anger. Next, Cornett (1986) stated that physiological benefit of laughter from humor can increase oxygen in blood, increased production of natural painkillers in the body systems, muscles, diaphragm, and exercising of lungs. Then, social theory of humor explained humor is good means to build better group interaction and transmission of cultural mores (Coleman, 1992). These benefits can be a tool to solve problems that typically exist in classroom. Moreover, humor can provide positive effect for students. Wanzer as cited in Ali et al (2015) stated that “it helps learners relax, alleviates stress, and often makes it easier for students and teachers to connect personally” (p. 127).

The benefits of humor also can be felt in the language classroom. The English lesson is the right area that more need of laugh than any other subjects (Forman, 2011). Humors in language learning are able to increase students’ consciousness of language forms (Lucas, 2005)

The researcher would like to find out the students’ perception on teachers’ humor in teaching and learning process at EED UMY. Unconsciously, some of the lecturers in EED UMY use humor in their teaching and learning process. Thus, this study is conducted to reveal the effects of using humor in teaching and learning process and to what extant EED UMY teachers use humor in teaching

learning process. The conceptual framework of this research is presented in the following chart.

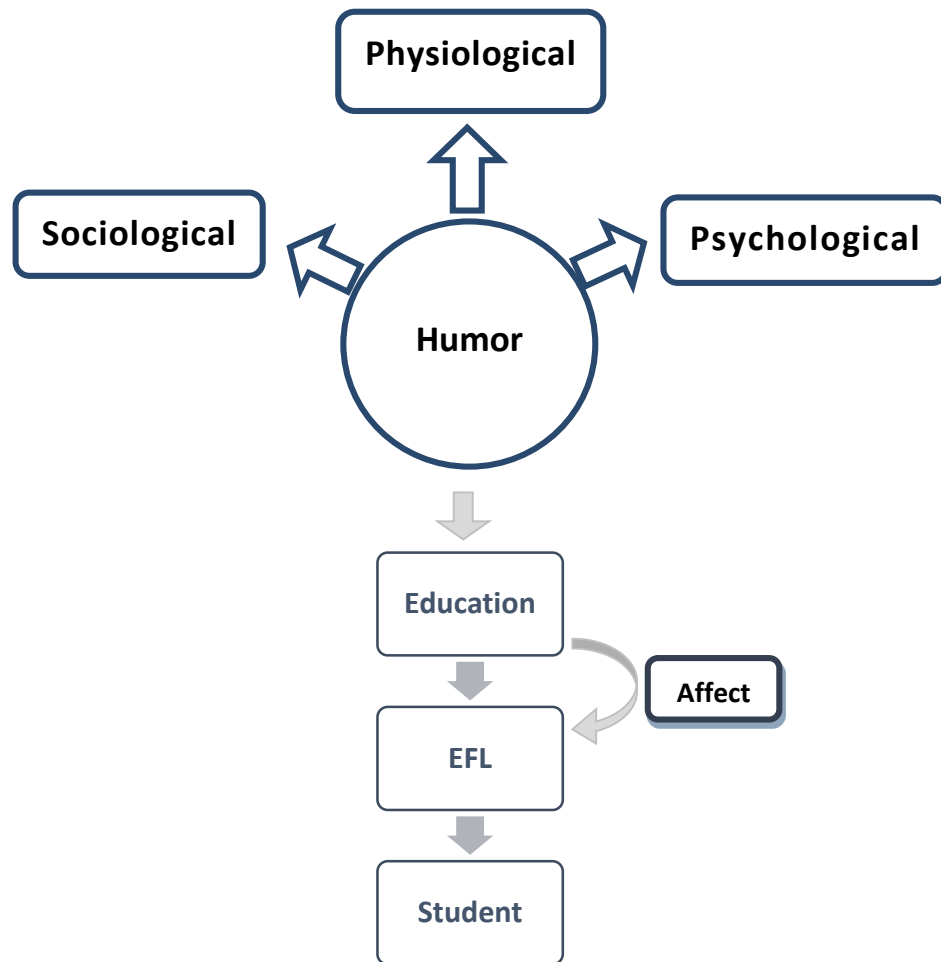


Figure 1.1 The Conceptual Framework