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Faculty of Letters and Languages  
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Submitted and defended by:

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**The Importance of Using Humorous Pauses as a Technique to  
Enhance EFL Students' Engagement: The case of EFL teachers  
and students in the English division of Biskra University**

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## DECLARATION

I, Sana MERGHAD, do hereby solemnly declare that the study presented in this dissertation is entirely my own personal work. It is submitted for the fulfillment of Master degree in Science of the Language, department of English at Mohamed KHEIDER university of Biskra, Algeria.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sana MERGHAD', written in a cursive style.

## **DEDICATION**

*I dedicate this work to my beloved family.*

*Mom **Zakia** & Dad **Othmane** thanks for your unconditional love, affection, support, and patience. Thank you for believing in me and paying for fixing my laptop for about a hundred times this year.*

*To be honest, accomplishing this work and earning this degree wasn't that easy. I am far beyond blessed for being born and raised in a supportive and loving family that always has my back.*

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*To all my friends who love me and love to see me prosper endlessly, it is for you.*

*Lastly, to the one who gives me astronomical vibes each time, **Sana MERGHAD.***

*May this be the start of something good.*

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## ABSTRACT

Students' engagement has always captured the interest of various language educators and scholars. This latter plays a vital role in the classroom; it is considered as an indicator of teacher's effectiveness as well as students' achievement. On the other hand, teaching, especially in higher education, needs to be modern, vivid, amusing and motivating to engage students with the lecture or with the knowledge being presented. Furthermore, teaching strategies and techniques must be updated to meet the criteria of each generation because nowadays' students tend more to informal teaching and learning; in which the teacher creates a friendly atmosphere for students to learn, to participate, to laugh, to feel at ease, and to act freely in the classroom. Therefore, in order to create such an environment, humor is a great strategy that breaks the ice between teachers and students, breaks boredom, and the nonstop teaching process that students dislike. In light of the previous, this study mainly aimed at highlighting the importance of integrating humorous pauses as a technique to enhance the EFL students' engagement. It was hypothesized that the implementation of humorous pauses during lectures and tutorial sessions could be an effective and successful technique that enhances students' engagement and breaks boredom in the classroom. In order to adopt the named technique in the EFL classes at Biskra University, we attempted to explore teachers' and students' perceptions and views regarding the latter. Through a detailed qualitative analysis of semi-structured questionnaires provided to EFL teachers and students who responded voluntarily, it was revealed from the evidence a great deal of positive attitudes concerning the use of this technique and its effect on the (cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement); besides, the findings disclosed certain emergent themes regarding the use of humorous pauses in pedagogy. In nutshell, the results of the present study answered the research questions and confirmed their hypotheses.

**Keywords:** students' engagement, motivation, humorous pauses, humor, EFL classroom, higher education, humor competence.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

**BFI:** Big Five Inventory

**CC:** Communicative Competence

**EFL:** English as Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as Second Language

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**HSQ:** Humor Styles Questionnaire

**HC:** Humor Competence

**HP:** Humorous Pauses

**NL:** Native Language

**PhD:** Doctorate of Philosophy

**PL:** Personalized Learning

**SE:** Student Engagement

**TEFL:** Teaching English as Foreign Language

**TL:** Target Language

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الملخص

Resumen

## **Introduction**

Language' teaching and learning has been, and is still, an arousing field of interest in pedagogy to many researchers. Many scholars and language specialists refer to teaching as a challenging task that teachers must be well- trained to meet the qualities of an effective and a good teacher. Learning, on the other hand, is an on-going process which does not require specifically an academic setting; however, it needs an appropriate environment so that learners can learn effectively.

It is an accepted fact that students' needs, wishes, and learning styles differ from one to another, so the teaching strategies and techniques must vary as well. In order to fully engage and motivate students to learn, students' attention must be triggered. Speaking about triggers, the teacher's sense of humor is of great example.

As known, students are heavily influenced by the environment, the content, the syllabi, and the teacher's way of presenting the lecture. For this reason, the teacher must be aware of the importance of creating a sense of socialization in an adequate learning environment, so that students can feel secure, interested, motivated, and more importantly, engaged. One of the numerous qualities of an effective teacher is when s/he detects whenever students feel bored and detached from the subject being presented, and s/he smoothly grabs students' attention and interest back again.

Although the diverse number of studies undertook regarding the use of humor in the EFL classes (Gorham, 1990; Garner, 2006; Wanzer, 2006, 2010; Hackathorn, 2011; Montlagh, 2014; Pham, 2014; Ocon, 2015; Bakar, 2018; Fata, 2018; Loizou, 2019), several teachers overlook its benefic usage as a technique in the EFL classes and oppose its use as a teaching strategy (Berk, 1998).

## **1. Statement of the Problem**

The EFL classrooms are supposed to be vivid and the learning process requires a positive, a creative, and an amusing environment in order to be successful. Due to several factors, like timing, subject, and way of teaching, students get bored, de-motivated, and disengaged. In fact, de-motivation may be a source of dullness and class noises. On the other hand, it is the teacher's task to provide alternatives to all the previous and other psychological issues.

During the learning journey as an EFL student, the researcher observed that students become less engaged in classes especially with the information being presented, and lose interest and attention easily in some courses. They even do skip some classes because of the teacher's personality and the passive way of delivering the content.

Students at some point feel as if they are unable to breathe-out i.e., laugh, communicate, interact, and feel at ease. For this reason, teachers as facilitators must be aware of how to integrate students with the subject being presented smoothly and re-motivate them using appropriate teaching methods and strategies that are appreciated by students and lead them to relaxation.

In order to better approach this topic, a preliminary study was conducted before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a direct and an informal observation in different EFL classes, of different levels, we observed that some teachers use humor while presenting lectures whereas others do not. It was used in different ways, like giving funny comments, jokes, anecdotes etc. Furthermore, as was noticed, this use of humor was mainly a combination of content-related and non-content related humor where students seemed amused. Afterwards, a number of informal questions were directed to the users of this strategy. They highly believe in its importance and its applicability in the EFL classrooms.



However, as Garner (2003) stated: “it is not the humor per se, it is the effective use of humor that is key” (para.24).i.e., the issue is in the way how teachers use humor in the classroom in an organized manner to guarantee students’ engagement and prevent boredom. Following this vein, and due to the lack in literature concerning the way of using humor, this present study contributes to investigate the effectiveness of using humor in form of appropriate pauses (humorous pauses/breaks) during sessions as a technique to enhance students’ engagement and prevent boredom in the EFL classrooms.

## **2. Literature Review**

Humor recently became an arousing field of interest in research, especially in higher education. Hackathorn, Garczynski, Blankmeyer, Tennial, and Solomon (2011), For instance, tested the usefulness of humor on the first three levels of Blooms’ Taxonomy (knowledge, comprehension, and application). Their study showed that humor only increases students’ comprehension on the first place and knowledge next. As for application, there was no result to be appeared.

According to Montlagh, Motallebzade, and Fatmi (2014), they found that the teacher’s sense of humor can be effective for language learning in EFL context in general, and promote reading comprehension in particular. The same study showed also that intrinsic motivation was increased due to the latter.

Gorham and Christophel (1990) suggested that using humor in EFL classrooms fosters learning speed. This can be even more effective if the humor was used in relation to the instructional content (Wanzer, Frymier & Irwin, 2010). Following the same vein, Garner (2006) stated that students learn more when they are exposed to lessons presented by using humor that is content-related. His experiment revealed a high rate in maximizing the learning

process to a group who was exposed to humor, whereas the other group was not. The study showed a high level in students' recall and retention of information.

In order to confirm the previous scholars' findings concerning the use of instructional humor and content-related humor, other researchers came to study this phenomenon from both teachers' and students' perspectives. For example, (Pham, 2014; Bakar, 2018) both explored the appreciation of using humor in education. Precisely, they focused on the teachers' and students' perceptions and practices. On the other hand, Wanzer, Frymier, Wojtaszczyk and Smith (2006) found that students can easily differentiate between the appropriate and inappropriate humor used by their teachers. Their study also showed that material-related humor is more appreciated by students.

A respectful number of studies were conducted upon the effect of using humor on EFL classroom environment. Ocon (2015) described his experience as a teacher who used humor in order to create a positive learning environment. Furthermore, it was found, based on students' views, that using humor helped them feeling at ease, less stressed, create a strong relationship between teacher and students, as well as encouraged them to better understand lessons (Fata, Komariah & Irfandy, 2018).

Speaking of the crucial place of humor in classroom, Loizou and Recchia (2019) stated in their prominent book 'Research on young children's humor' that: "when humor is positive, students are more motivated, feel more cheerful, feel less anxious and show greater interest and engagement to the subject matter" (p.129). In contrast, other researchers disagreed with the use of humor believing that humor has no place in the classroom. (Bryant, Comisky & Zillman, 1979).

As a matter of fact, the majority of studies focused mainly on using humor to maximize language learning, to enhance students' memorization, retention and recall. In addition to that,

an undeniable importance was given to the use of humor in the EFL classes to create a positive and an open atmosphere for students to excel their learning. However, there is a lack in literature concerning the appropriate application of humor in classroom.

Due to this reason, the current contribution emphasized on the importance of using humorous pauses (breaks) which vary in content during lessons. These funny pauses include funny stories, funny comments, funny pictures (memes), jokes, and so forth to break the boring, continuous process of teaching and to give students a considerable time to breathe out, interact and communicate. This study also explored teachers and students' perceptions toward using humorous pauses in their classrooms and the extent to which they favor this strategy.

### **3. Research Questions**

In order to narrow down the scope of the present study, critical questions were asked.

**Q1.** How do EFL teachers and students at Biskra University view the idea of using humorous pauses to enhance students' engagement?

**Q2.** To what extent can humorous pauses be a successful strategy in braking students' boredom in EFL classes?

**Q3.** What type of the three engagements can be mostly affected by humorous pauses in students?

### **4. Research Hypotheses**

Based on the above research questions, we hypothesized that:

**H1.** If EFL teachers and students have a positive attitude(s) toward the use of humorous pauses and apply it, students' engagement will be enhanced.

**H2.** Humorous pauses can be a successful strategy that breaks students' boredom in EFL classes.

**H3.** Emotional engagement is mostly affected by humorous pauses in students.

## **5. Aims of the Study**

This study was worth-conducting because it contributed to the field of English language teaching and learning. As a matter of fact, this research focused on the use of humorous pauses in the EFL classrooms to enhance students' engagement, motivation, and prevent boredom. Furthermore, it raised students' awareness toward the use of humor in English classes and paved the way for them to adopt this strategy once they become future teachers. Additionally, it provided teachers, especially novice ones, with a different perspective toward teaching, which is to integrate humorous pauses with teaching and learning to make this process more enjoyable and effective.

## **6. Significance of the Study**

The purpose of the current study was to highlight the importance of integrating humor in pedagogy. Specifically, it addressed its significance by applying it in a systematic and well-organized form such as pauses/breaks in the classroom. Furthermore, this scientific piece of writing investigated the extent to what this technique is effective as well as workable in English department classes at Biskra University.

## **7. Research Methodology**

Based on the research nature, the literature review, and the research questions, the researcher opted for the following methodological procedures.

This study required following the qualitative approach paradigm because it deals with human' behaviors, attitudes, opinions and perceptions. It is exploratory in nature due to its

primary objective which is exploring teachers and students' perceptions concerning the subject under study. Furthermore, the study targeted EFL teachers and students of all levels (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Master 1&2 LMD), from both branches (Sciences of the Language & Literature and Civilization). The sample (n=69) consisted of (17 teachers & 53 students) who answered the questionnaires voluntarily online.

The internet was the only access to reach the sample, because providing the sample with hard-copies was impossible due to the obligatory quarantine to prevent people from being infected with COVID-19 pandemic.

## **8. Structure of the Study**

Typically this study is consisted of three main parts: two theoretical chapters, and the practical part. Each chapter was devoted to address theoretical frameworks and rationales concerning the variables and all what is related to it.

Initially, chapter one displayed a constructive overview concerning the concept of students' engagement. It forwarded its definitions according to several scholars and authors that contributed in this field, as well as its cognitive, behavioral, and emotional dimensions. In addition, this first chapter emphasized on the positive and the negative effects which other factors such as: motivation, students' academic achievement, boredom, and rapport have on students' engagement.

Furthermore, the following chapter was as quite similar in structure as the first one. It provided a rich literature review concerning the independent variable, humor. The researcher explored the different conceptualizations and stated the distinction among several overlapped terms. Humor theories, types and forms which are seem to be appropriate to apply in classrooms. In addition, this part of the study pointed to the significance of humor subjectivity

and humor competence that need to be fostered in EFL students. The last point in this chapter tackled the importance of certain humorous materials on syllabus.

The final chapter was labeled field work, which was devoted to the practical and systematic investigation of the study. In this chapter the researcher analyzed and discussed the results of the data gathered by one main research tool: teachers and students' questionnaires. The field work reported the findings along with their analysis, comments, discussions, and synthesis.

## **9. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The current study aimed mainly to investigate the importance of using humorous pauses as a technique to enhance students' engagement. Furthermore, its core objective was to explore teachers and students' perceptions and views concerning the effectiveness of the named technique. The findings supported the research hypotheses and revealed that this method is successful as well as efficient in EFL context.

Even though the main purpose of this study was achieved, the study needed more validation and credibility. In fact, it was intended to diversify in the use of data gathering tools in order to solidify the work and have deeper insights and opinions regarding the workability and feasibility of this strategy. It would be insightful if teachers apply this technique in the classroom and the researcher observes its impact on students' engagement, motivation and even learning process. Moreover, the use of interviews and focus groups could have been an opportunity to meet students in person and to observe their body language, tones, voices, and facial expressions. Additionally, they can feel free to express their opinions regarding teacher's use of humor and how his/her personality extremely affects their behaviors and attitudes.

However, due to the out-breaking worldwide pandemic COVID-19, questionnaire was the only appropriate and accessible data collecting tool in this situation. The number of students who participated to answer the questionnaire was sufficient, yet teachers' participation was below the expectations, for this reason, the findings of this study cannot be generalized. The questionnaire was emailed to all teachers of the English language department of Biskra University and only 17 out of 53 responded to this request. In addition, their answers were superficial to certain point, unlike students' responses which uncovered several truths and facts concerning the way English is being taught. The COVID-19 pandemic was the major impediment that hindered the normal process of conducting a research and meet participants in person. In sum, this study is limited due to two main reasons: teachers' collaboration and the COVID-19 pandemic; otherwise, the present work is open for further research.

# **CHAPTER ONE: STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT: REVIEW**

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## **Introduction**

This chapter of the study mainly focused on the conceptualization of students' engagement, definitions and views of different scholars, researchers, and authors. Furthermore, the upcoming sections in the present chapter tackled the importance of engagement, rapport, motivation and their role in increasing students' attention and retention as well as creating a healthy and a positive environment for learning. Next, a clear description was highlighted concerning dimensions/types of engagement along with their relationship with students' academic achievement. This chapter also addressed the concept of boredom which is, to some extent, overlooked in pedagogy, in addition to teacher's personality and behavior with students in classroom.

### **1.1. Definitions of Student Engagement**

The concept "student engagement" (SE) received a great deal of attention and interest from researchers and has always been a challenging task for teachers. In reality, there is not a clear consensus between authors when it comes to define it (Ciric & Jovanovic, 2016). For example, Great partnership (2016) stated that student engagement refers to the extent to which students have positive attitudes toward learning and being taught, in addition to the fact that their motivation in educational settings is heavily based on their passion, interests and spirit of inquiry. Following the same vein, Trowler (2010) defined it as the following:

Student engagement is concerned with the interaction between the time, effort and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimise the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance, and reputation of the institution (p.3).

Simply put, engagement and interaction are considered as the foundation of effective as well as active learning. Educators aim at engaging their students in order to develop their competences as well as performances and foster their academic achievements.

As cited in Barkley (2010), student engagement is the basis of learning, literally, as Shulman (2002) stated “learning begins with student engagement” (p.37). Since learning and students’ engagement are related, Barkley (2010) pointed to teachers’ perspectives concerning the latter. According to her, college teachers believe that the engaged students are aware about their learning process. i.e., the essence of what is learnt and what they want to learn. In addition to that, they are constantly ambitious, passionate, and excited to exceed expectations and make further efforts about what is required.

Further perspective by Cary (2013) who believed that engagement has a broader sense; it includes external influential factors, such as: sense of belonging and identity, rather than just students’ participation and involvement with the institution patterns (as cited in Zepke, 2017). Reschly and Christenson (2012, p.3) supported this perspective referring to student engagement as “the glue, or mediator, that links important contexts—home, school, peers, and community—to students and, in turn, to outcomes of interest”.

## **1.2. Rapport, Engagement and Motivation in Classroom**

Teacher-student relationship, students’ engagement and motivation are among the important contributing factors that increase students’ achievement in classrooms. Frisby and Martin (2010) defined rapport as “an overall feeling between two people encompassing a mutual, trusting, and prosocial bond” (p.147). This study further argued students’ perceptions toward rapport as being not only an essential quality of an effective teacher, but also as a crucial feature among the classroom members. In addition, Frisby and Martin’s work

concluded that rapport positively and highly affects the sense of connectedness between teacher-students and between peers (as cited in Steele, 2017).

To the further side of rapport, student engagement and motivation are interrelated and equally significant conditions to foster active learning in the classroom. Nayir's (2017) study revealed a significant correlation between students' motivation and classroom engagement. Furthermore, the same study reported that their motivation level heavily increased active learning.

The concept of students' engagement was seen from two different perspectives: 1) is that motivation is inseparable part of engagement and investigators under this paradigm use the terms interchangeably. 2) In opposition to the first perspective, the researchers of the second view believe that motivation and engagement are quite far from being alike or being used in the same way, i.e., motivation precede engagement (James, 2015). To put in another way, students are unable to be engaged in the classroom unless they are motivated.

### **1.3. Engagement: Motivation and Active Learning**

#### **1.3.1. Motivation**

Motivation is a mental set that individuals possess and manage as a consequence to internal or external triggers. According to Cambridge Dictionary, motivation is the "enthusiasm for doing something". Dörnyei (1998), for instance, stated that researchers agree upon the perception that motivation is a key factor for determining human behaviors, in which energize it and give it instructions. However, recently, motivation is not seen just as a reflection of some internal factors such as desire or instincts; nor is received as purely behavioral set in terms of stimulus-response (punishment/reinforcement) (Dörnyei, 1998). Rather, it focuses on "individuals' beliefs and thoughts" that convert into actions (Dörnyei, 1998.p.118).

Wherefore, Pintrich and Schunk's believed that: "motivation is the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained" (Dörnyei, 1998.p.118).

Following the same vein, Dörnyei (1998) defined motivation as: "process whereby a certain amount of instigation force arises, initiates action, and persists as long as no other force comes into play to weaken it and thereby terminate action, or until the planned outcome has been reached" (p.118).

In fact, motivation has two significant types namely: Intrinsic and Extrinsic.

#### **1.3.1.1. Intrinsic Motivation**

Humans are naturally active, inquisitive, curiosity-driven, and playful. This natural motivational tendency is perceived as intrinsic motivation, i.e., they accomplish certain activities for their constitutive gratification. Ryan and Deci (2000) referred to intrinsic motivation as "doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable" (p.55). On the other hand, Vallerand in Dörnyei, (2001) believed that motivation is to be internally motivated by oneself only, and that oneself is the "source of the impetus" to achieve certain goal (Barker, 2004. p.95).

Several studies resulted that teachers who support autonomy catalyze the sense of curiosity and challenge in their students (Deci, Nezlek, & Sheinman, 1981; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986; as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2000). As matter of fact, (Benware & Deci, 1984; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987) believed that controlled-by-teacher students squander the initiation and the willingness to learn (as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2000).

#### **1.3.1.2. Extrinsic Motivation**

Even though intrinsic motivation is a crucial type of motivation, the vast majority of students accomplish their tasks by being extrinsically supported. Ryan and Deci (2000) defined the latter as "a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done in order to attain

some separable outcome” (p.60). In their study, they provided a range of categories of extrinsic motivation.

First, external regulation is considered as the least autonomous form of this type. Behaviors under this category are done to please external requests and receive prizes and rewards. External regulation is quite common which contrasts with intrinsic type of motivation.

Second, this category is labeled introjected regulation. Here, individuals acting while feeling pressured in order to prevent frustration, guilt and to reach “ego-enhancement and pride”.

Three, when individuals are fully aware of the purpose behind the requirement and go along with it; by then, their actions are characterized by identified regulation.

Last but not least, the ultimate category of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation. “Integration occurs when identified regulations have been fully assimilated to the self” (Ryan and Deci, 2000. p.62). This category has things in common with intrinsic motivation, such as autonomy. For example, individuals are motivated to learn certain language in order to use in a certain situation (s), for a specific purpose (s).

### **1.3.2. Active Learning**

Along with motivation, active learning is another significant aspect found in student engagement studies. Felder and Brent (2009) defined active learning as “anything course-related that all students in a class session are called upon to do other than simply watching, listening and taking notes” (p.2). Learning is a life-long process and it is inherently active in humans. As an example, students are positively involved while listening to a classroom presentation. (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). However, Chickering and Gamson (1987) argued that students must be involved with learning not just by listening, but also by integrating other skills such as speaking, writing, and reading, in addition to a high level of thinking where they

discuss complex notions and develop problem-solving skills (as cited in Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

Students' engagement is heavily based on these interrelated concepts: motivation and active learning. In which, Barkley (2010, p.6) stated that "student engagement is the product of motivation and active learning". She continued saying that if any of the two components is missing, the former i.e., the engagement of students, will not occur. The whole process overlap in a way as illustrated below in the Figure. 1:

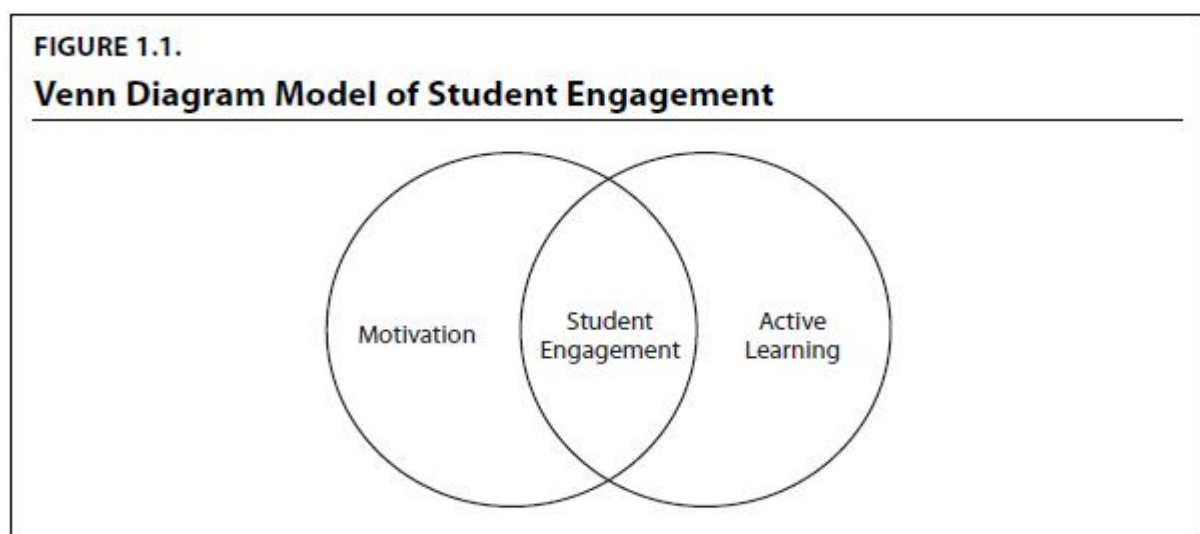


Figure 1 Venn Diagram Model of Student Engagement. Reprinted from Student Engagement Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty (p.6), by E.F. Barkley 2010, ISBN 978-0-470-28191-8

The diagram appears above displays a clear and a significant relation between motivation, student engagement, and active learning. In fact, a real and an effective educational experience cannot occur unless the two elements (motivation & active learning) are blended to form engaged students.

#### **1.4. Dimensions of Student Engagement**

Students' engagement is a multi-dimensional concept. It covers three domains that follow a clear order of sequence and creates a sort of relationship between the subject studied in the

classroom and the progress of the learning process (As cited in Ciric & Jovanovic, 2016). Ciric and Jovanovic (2016) continued stating that: “student engagement has primarily and historically focused upon achievement, positive behavior, and a sense of belonging of the students so they might remain in school” (p.188). That is to say, disengaged in classroom is one of several causes that lead to school dropout and class skipping.

Schindler, Burkhlode, Morad, and Marsh (2017) examined students’ engagement studies, specifically models and measures to better comprehend how student engagement’ types are conceptualized and to state certain indicators which are related to each dimension as appearing in the Figure.2 below:

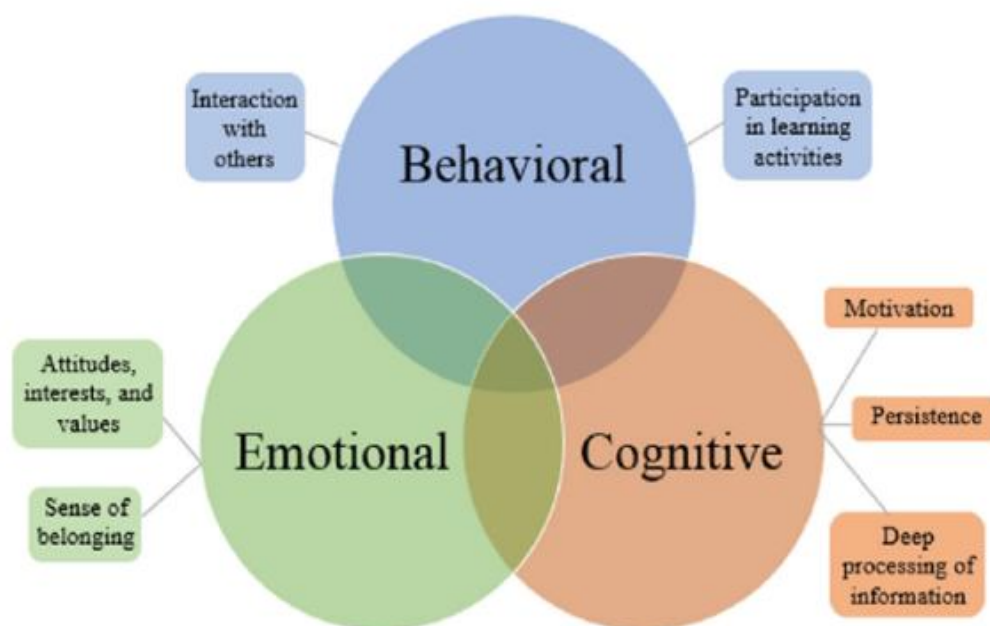


Figure 2 Conceptual Framework of Types and Indicators of Student Engagement. Reprinted from Computer-based technology and student engagement: a critical review of the literature - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Conceptual-framework-of-types-and-indicators-of-student-engagement\\_fig1\\_320171052](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Conceptual-framework-of-types-and-indicators-of-student-engagement_fig1_320171052) [accessed 17 Apr, 2020]

The Figure 2 provides a set of engagement’ types: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagements. Each type has peculiar elements that refer to them; that is to say, each

engagement affect certain level or aspect in students as appears above. Apparently students' engagement is an integral part, if not the essence, of the learning and teaching processes.

Even though the study of engagement lacks a clear consensus among authors concerning the definition and types of student engagement, the majority agreed upon three main types (Reschly & Christenson, 2012), domains (Jonas, 2016), or as referred to them as dimensions (Trowler, 2010; Ciric & Jovanovic, 2016), namely: behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, and emotional engagement. Furthermore, Shernoff (2013) also believed that engagement relates to multiple dimensions and aspects that involve emotions, cognitions, and behaviors.

As cited in Macklem (2015), Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) interestingly identify the previously mentioned dimensions.

#### **1.4.1. Behavioral Engagement**

Behavioral engagement is conceptualized as student involvement and participation in the classroom, following the rules, and avoiding disruptive behaviors, or skipping classes for instance (Finn, Pannozzo, & Voelkl, 1995; Finn & Rock, 1997; as cited in Fredricks, et al., 2004; Harris, 2008). Other scholars referred to this type as the participation in undertaking academic tasks and involve in classroom learning, additionally to positive behaviors like attention, asking and answering questions, presence, and making efforts (Finn, 1989; Birch & Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Ladd, 1997; as cited in Fredricks, et al., 2004). On the other side, (Finn, 1989; Finn et al., 1995) focused heavily on being an active part in "school-related activities" such as practicing sports (as cited in Fredricks, et al., 2004).

#### **1.4.2. Emotional Engagement**



Parsons, Richey, and Parsons (2014) reported that “Affective engagement includes a sense of belonging in the classroom and an interest, curiosity, or enthusiasm around specific topics or tasks” (p.24). This type is seen as a separate dimension which relates to students’ affective reactions toward the teaching/learning process, for example the experience of boredom, sadness, enjoyment, frustration, and anxiety (Yonezawa, Jones, & Joselowsky, 2009; as cited in Ciric & Jovanovic, 2016 & Fredricks, et al., 2004).

### **1.4.3. Cognitive Engagement**

The current final dimension is directly related to students’ internal mental aspect, in other words student’s psychology. Ciric & Jovanovic (2016) stated that cognitive engagement is further investigated in the field of psychology, where it is closely related to “motivational processes and the development of meta-cognitive strategies” (p.188). Furthermore, this type emphasized on three main sets according to (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Newmann et al., 1992; Wehlage et al., 1989) namely: 1) psychological investment in learning, 2) a desire to go beyond the requirement, and 3) a preference for challenge (as cited in Fredricks, et al., 2004).

Following the same vein, Harris (2008), in his study, has identified six “different conceptions of engagement in learning” (p.65), including categories that go under each type of engagement

- Participating in classroom activities and following school rules ( behaving)
- Being interested and enjoying participation in what happens at school  
(enjoying)
- Being motivated and confident in participation in what happens at school  
(being motivated)
- Being involved by thinking ( thinking)
- Purposefully learning to reach life goals (seeing purpose)

- Owning and valuing learning (owning)

The first category, behaving, contained behavioral understanding. Enjoying and being motivated heavily focused on the emotional or psychological aspect of the student, whereas thinking, seeing purpose, and owning belong to the cognitive type of engagement.

### 1.5. Students' Engagement and Academic Achievement

Academic achievement heavily depends upon the engagement of students in the classroom. Scholars such as (Fredricks et al., 2004) believe that student engagement is a meta-construct domain which has multiple dimensions: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional.

Jonas (2016) on the other hand, based on previous studies, suggested a new comprehensive model entitled The Auckland Student Engagement Model (ASE Model) to better approach this particular area. His ASE Model represented a dynamic mechanism concerning the interconnectedness between and across the three types of engagement, the four main influencing factors (school environment, teacher support, peer support, and student background), and academic performance. During his investigation, other variables influenced the association between the basic dependent and independent variables (student engagement and academic achievement). These intervening factors are shown in the Figure.3 below:

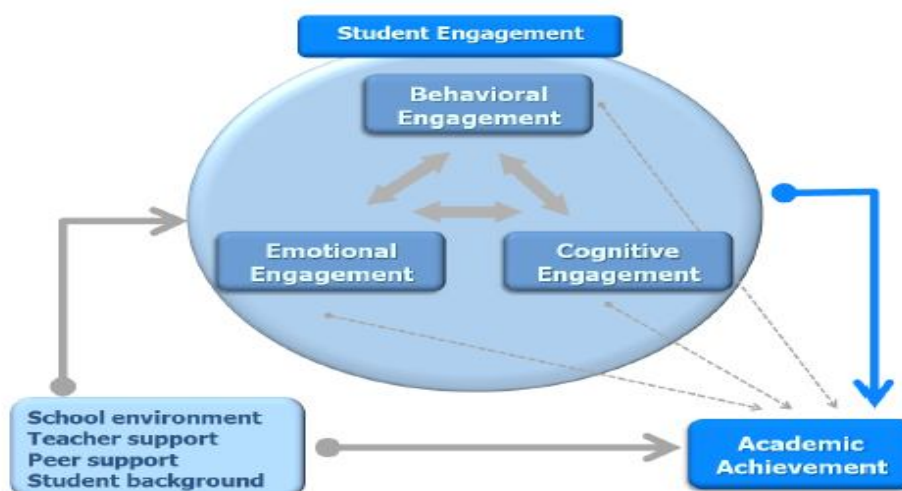


Figure 3 The Auckland Student Engagement Model (the ASE Model). Reprinted from The relationship between student engagement and academic achievement - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Auckland-Student-Engagement-Model-the-ASE-Model\\_fig1\\_309592919](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Auckland-Student-Engagement-Model-the-ASE-Model_fig1_309592919) [accessed 19 Apr, 2020]

As the above figure displays, students' engagement is a combination of three main engagements (behavioral, cognitive, & emotional) they are interrelated and complement each other to form the holistic concept of (SE). Seemingly, student engagement influences academic achievement; however, it is not the only influencer. As exhibited, school environment, teacher support, peer support, and student background are external factors that affect both: student engagement and their academic achievement. These external factors have positive effects on academic success (Hattie, 2009a) and student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; as cited in Jonas, 2016).

## **1.6. Teacher's Personality**

The quest for what makes a good teacher has been continuously investigated by researchers, policy-makers, practitioners for a good period of time. Notwithstanding, there was no configuration concerning the qualities nor the characteristics that are significant for teachers. Studies over teacher's personality traits have identified a solid relationship between the former and students' academic achievement and outcomes (Bruchmann, 2019). As cited in Bruchmann's work, psychologists define personality traits "as patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviour that remain relatively stable across situations and time and play a significant role in shaping behavior" (para.2).

According to Bruchmann (2019) again, a teacher's personality indeed makes a good teacher in terms of what is believed by others to be personality traits and once the Big Five Inventory (BFI) is concerned. The (BFI) test is a widely used tool that measures personality

(Gosling, Rentfrow & Swan, 2003; as cited in Sandlin, 2019). They suggested that (BFI) test consists of five main categories as illustrated in the Table.1 below by John and Srivastava (1999):

Table 1 : Big Five Inventory (BFI)

<b>Big Five Dimensions</b>	<b>Facet (and correlated trait adjective)</b>
Extraversion vs. introversion	Gregariousness (sociable) Assertiveness (forceful) Activity (energetic) Excitement-seeking (adventurous) Positive emotions (enthusiastic) Warmth (outgoing)
Agreeableness vs. antagonism	Trust (forgiving) Straightforwardness (not demanding) Altruism (warm) Compliance (not stubborn) Modesty (not show-off) Tender-mindedness (sympathetic)
Conscientiousness vs. lack of direction	Competence (efficient) Order (organized) Dutifulness (not careless) Achievement striving (thorough) Self-discipline (not lazy)

	Deliberation (not impulsive)
Neuroticism vs. emotional stability	Anxiety (tense) Angry hostility (irritable) Depression (not contented) Self-consciousness (shy) Impulsiveness (moody) Vulnerability (not self-confident)
Openness vs. closedness to experience	Ideas (curious) Fantasy (imaginative) Aesthetics (artistic) Actions (wide interests) Feelings (excitable) Values (unconventional)

**Source:** John, O. P., & Srivastava, S. (1999). The Big-Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (Vol. 2, pp. 102–138). New York: Guilford Press. Retrieved from: <http://www.uoregon.edu/~sanjay/bigfive.html#where>

Researchers that worked on personality focused in the first place on comprehending student's personalities (Kim, Jörg, & Klassen, 2019). Simply, teachers should play different roles in the classroom. For example, Stronge (2007) has identified several roles that teacher should play in the classroom. Starting with:

- a. **The role of caring:** caring is a vast term, as the concept effectiveness per se. The teacher must care for their students in a manner that students themselves are aware of it. Caring goes beyond knowing more about students' qualities and defaults of

each and every one of them and to get along with them. Caring is shown in certain sub-actions, such as:

- **Listening;** a good listener makes an effective teacher, in which the teacher shows empathy and support to students not just in the classroom but also concerning their personal lives. Through communication, the teacher shows tenderness, care, encouragement so that they gain students' trust and to create a solid rapport that eases the teaching/ learning processes.
  - **Understanding;** students appreciate it when their teachers understand their interests, concerns, questions, and answers. They also value the flexibility in behaving with them, especially when they are late for class for instance. In fact, "Through appropriate self-disclosure, teachers become human in the eyes of students" (p.24).
  - **Knowing students;** caring about students includes knowing them formally as well as informally. Effective teachers are aware of the importance of communication and keeping in touch with their students outside the educational settings. Along with knowing students' needs and styles, teachers need to go deeper and reach further level to know students' personalities, likes and dislikes, and even personal issues that hinder their educational progress and achievement.
- b. The role of fairness and respect:** in fact, "respect and equity are identified as the prerequisites of effective teaching in the eyes of students" (p.25). Students view that fairness and mutual respect are important elements in creating a healthy relationship among teachers and peers. Furthermore, students expect equilibrium in treating by the side of their teachers, i.e., teachers should not favor one student

over another and treat them equally regardless of their background, race, gender, and/or ethnicity.

- c. **The role of reflective practice:** self-reflection is another quality that effective teachers possess. The teacher's reflective practice is a part of successful teaching in which the teacher is thinks thoughtfully about his/her teaching process.

### **1.7. Boredom in Pedagogical Setting**

Boredom is an ever existing psychological problem that majority of students suffer from in educational settings. Although the state of boredom has been deeply studied in psychology, a little interest was given to it in pedagogy (Zawodniak, Kruk, Chumas, 2017). Zawodniak et.al, (2017) believed that the reason why the study of boredom is underrated in the field of language learning is due to the view of teachers who relate it to anxiety, laziness, and other psychological factors.

Boredom perceived as: "an affective state encompassing absence of stimulation, unpleasant feelings and low psychological arousal" (Mikulas, & Vodanovich, 1993; as cited in Kruk, 2016, para.6). Precisely speaking, Buksik (2009) referred to boredom rather as "negative emotional state consisting in the feeling of inner emptiness and the lack of interest, usually caused by monotony, invariability of environment, the same activities, and the absence of incentives" (as cited in Kruk, 2016, para.6).

The fact of what causes boredom was seen from two main perspectives: situational and dispositional. The former is related to situational criteria. i.e., they are specific characteristics peculiar to classroom environment (Kanevsky, & Keighley, 2003) whereas the latter is the result of individual's tendency to perceive a situation as boring (Vodanovich, 2003; as cited in

Kruk, 2016). Macklem (2015) stated that boredom is a negative experience, in which, it occurs while the student is in a middle of an activity or no activity in which to engage.

Boredom can be a result of the teacher's passive way of teaching; as cited in Hilario, Perez, & Coplin, 2019, Nagashibaevna (2019) for instance, who assumed that:

There are some teachers who do not challenge their students, rarely give homework, are often behind on grading, and give "free" days on a regular basis. There is no creativity in their teaching, they rarely smile or seem excited to be there, and they typically make no connections with other faculty or staff members (p.8).

Simply put, teachers, in some cases, can be the source of students' boredom, disinterest, and disengagement in the classroom. Consequently, students lose their attention and skip classes.

Teacher's behavior is of great importance when it comes to teaching and learning. Teacher enthusiasm and motivation toward the content allow students to value the subject matter and feel enjoyment (Macklem, 2014).

To sum up, students are flexible individuals that can be easily influenced whether positively or negatively by their teachers, peers, and the classroom environment.

## **Conclusion**

Through this chapter, it seemed that students' engagement is of great importance in the field of teaching and learning. Several authors and scholars emphasized upon the necessity of enhancing and fostering a pleasant environment that permits students to feel at ease and learn in a better situation. No matter how students' engagement is referred to, it remains the first challenging task for all teachers.



## **CHAPTER TWO: HUMOR AND HUMOROUS PAUSES IN EFL**

### **CLASSROOM**

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## **Introduction**

The present chapter introduced the significance of using humor as an effective strategy in pedagogy. This strategy creates a sense of engagement among students and motivates them to learn passionately. This piece of writing shed the light on the fundamental theories of humor (superiority, incongruity, and relief theory), its physical, psychological, as well as social benefits. Furthermore, the worldwide known types of humor (affiliative, aggressive, self-enhancing, and self-defeating) are also insightfully developed.

In fact, not all forms of humor are appreciated in classrooms; however, jokes, anecdotes, and memes are always welcomed. Finally, this account concluded with the impact of humor on the rigid syllabi that cause, generally, frustration to students.

### **2.1. Conceptualization of Humor, Sense of Humor, and Laughter**

A number of researches have investigated the importance of humor in different fields of study such as philosophy, psychology, anthropology, medicine and education. Recently, based on scientific studies, many scholars recommended that teachers adopt multiple strategies and techniques in order to maintain their students' focus and manage their classes. Humor as a pedagogical strategy can effectively maximize learning and decrease boredom if it is content-related (Garner, 2005).

Humor is purely a personal trait that all humans have. Sense of humor differs from one individual to another and changes across cultures, societies, age, gender, and several other affective factors. According to Savage, Lujan, Thipparthi ,and DiCarlo (2017), humor does not cause learning per se but causes the appropriate, positive, and healthy environment to create and enhance learning. Above all, “ humor can break down the natural barriers that exist

by virtue of our position, title, age, height, and cholesterol level compared with that of our students” (Berk, 1998, p.85).

Some teachers underestimate the usefulness of integrating humor in their classes, in time where studies showed that humor facilitates rapport, engagement, and motivation (Steele, 2017), and that the professor’s humor has a significant impact on students’ attention and retention (Mantooth, 2010).

The success of humor in pedagogy depends heavily on the style of the teachers and their artistic way of humor delivery (Berk, 1998). In fact, there is a strong relationship between humor styles and divergent thinking, i.e., creativity (Cayirdag, & Acarb, 2010). That is to say, humor can serve as a creative way to develop students’ skills.

Humor is a complex phenomenon which has been through several changes in meanings. Despite the vast majority of philosophers, thinkers, scholars and researchers’ studies in the field of humor; yet, there is a little consensus over what constitutes humor (Smuts, n.d.). Humor indeed is seen as an abstract concept which does not agree upon a definite definition (Goldstein, 1972, as cited in Hoad, Deed & Lugg, 2013). However, a clear distinction between humor, sense of humor and laughter needs to be made.

In broader sense, humor (American English) or humour as in British English spelling, was defined as “that quality which appeals to a sense of the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous” i.e., “a funny or amusing quality” (Merriam-Webster, 1828). Additionally, LiteraryDevices.net (2013) referred to humor as a tool that triggers peoples’ laughter and amusement, believing that it breaks the boredom and tedium to make certain audience more relaxed and comfortable.

Sense of humor, on the other hand, is understood as “a tendency to laugh frequently, to easily perceive humorous incongruities in the environment, to tell jokes and amuse others, to be generally cheerful, to maintain a humorous outlook in coping with stress, to deprecate oneself in a humorous way, and so on” (Martin, 2004, p.3). According to Cambridge Dictionary, the word "sense" is defined as “an ability to understand, recognize, value, or react to something”. Specifically, it alludes to the awareness of an individual once humor is being produced in a giving situation (Theidioms.com).

Humor and laughter are closely related terms, yet a clear distinction must be taken into account. Smuts (n.d) stated that humor does not always provoke laughter; in fact, humor can result in form of a smile only. Laughter, for instance, is seen as an unconscious reaction to verbal and social indications which Provine (2000) referred to as the “speaking in tongues” (para.1). He argued that even in non-humorous situations laughter still exists i.e., laughter does not depend on humor to be produced. Differently, humor is perceived more sophisticatedly than laughter, in matter of fact it is seen as an intelligent and mental capacity that most often does not stimulate others to laugh (LaughterYoga.org).

## **2.2. Theories of Humor**

It is regularly believed that nothing ruins a joke as much as the endeavor to clarify it. In spite of this threat, a number of famous figures from the history of reasoning framed and proposed theories of humor. That is to say, they have advertised clarifications regarding the nature of humor and the causes of the specific sort of entertainment related with humor (Bardon, 2005).

As a fact, there are three dominant, traditional, and most well-known theories of humor which are respectfully ordered as: superiority theory, incongruity theory, and relief theory.

### **2.2.1. Superiority Theory**

Superiority theory's origins traces back to Plato, Aristotle, and Hobbes. It is considered as the oldest theory of humor (Bardon, 2005; Lintott, 2016; Scheel, 2017). The common idea of superiority theory is based on laughing at others' sufferance and misfortune, and on one's old, inferior self.

For instance, Hobbes (1588-1679) as cited in Scheel (2017), believed that the action of being superior to others and make fun of their feelings and discomfort is considered as an aggressive form of humor which may cause self-disparaging and self-defeating. Bardon (2005) stated that: "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"(p.2).

Following the same vein, Mark Twain, a famous humorist and literary writer, said that: "everything is funny as long as it's happening to someone else!" i.e., whatever happens to others who are inferior to us causes our laughter and causes us to feel pleasure consequently. Monro (1988) asserted that "Humor is derisive"; it can be used to laugh at others' inferiority as well as on one-self old mistakes.

This form of disparaging humor is the fundamental aspect of superiority theory. The latter elevates sense of unequal state in communities and societies which causes some sorts of discrimination concerning gender, race, ethnicity, and religion.

### **2.2.2. Incongruity Theory**

The second account of humor theory developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in reaction to Superiority Theory. Incongruity Theory simply refers to the contrast between expectation and reality of what is said in a certain situation.

According to Berk (1998, p.10) Incongruity is understood as “the juxtaposition of the expected with the unexpected”, it is a central theme that must be found in any form of humor. He voiced that the twist is also called the punch line which is the unfamiliar i.e., surprising situation that comes at last. Additionally, Berk (1998) provided several examples concerning the notion of Incongruity, for example: “Where there’s a will, there’s a won’t” (p.11). This sense of divergence is what creates humor and triggers laughter (Mantooth, 2010). He further added that humor is the fruits of verbal and/or visual incongruities. Similarly, Morreall (1989, p.1) states that: “amusement is the enjoyment of something which clashes with our mental patterns and expectations” (as cited in Scheel, 2017).

Kent and Hutcheson, among the famous formers of this theory, agreed upon the fact that humor is extracted from an intellectual and emotional realization of incongruity. Martin (1998) stated that the process of producing humor is attached to divergent thinking i.e., creativity and humor understanding to convergent thinking; in other words, intelligence. In addition to the aforementioned definitions and explanations, Rothbart (1976) added to Incongruity Theory that: “...although perception of an incongruous or unexpected event may lead to laughter, perception of an unexpected event may also lead to fear, curiosity, problem-solving, or concept learning” (as cited in Mantooth, 2010, p. 38).

### **2.2.3. Relief Theory**

Relief theory is considered as the last traditional humor theory. Humor in this latter is perceived as a process of releasing repressed emotions. As a matter of fact, it comes as a reaction to the Incongruity Theory.

Relief/arousal theory' main focus is on "the physiological release of tension by laughing" (Meyer, 2000; Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2004) as cited in Scheel (2017, p.15). Majorly, this theory was seen from two closely related and complex views, which were Herbert Spencer's nervous energy and Sigmund Freud's psychical energy. Spencer and Freud are the two main theorists that have contributed to the existence of this theory. In fact, Freud is seen as the eminent of relief theory (Lippitt, 1991).

Spencer's notion was heavily affected by the nineteenth century perspective of nervous energy (Lippitt, 1991). It focused on an account of the physiological foundation for the phenomenon of laughter. He noted a respectful variety of approaches wherein the frame stores excess nervous strength, and releases it via bodily pastime. When humans experience severe ache, an affected limb might also flow involuntarily, because the face controls and we, as humans, may additionally vocalize our pain. Joy and fear also are manifested physically. Bardon (2005) argued that, in a similar manner, laughter is a physical manifestation of the release of nervous strength.

Freud, on the other side in his psychic energy, provided a clear distinction between humor (jokes) and comic (ridiculous situations); that is to say, people release unexpected dynamic energy when they laugh which is needed to interpret the living situation. Reversely, when people understand the ridicule, they realize the energy summoned to make sense of the situation and produce it later on in form of laughter (Bardon, 2005).

The three humor theories largely differ. They interpret humor differently from various dimensions: philosophically, cognitively as well as socially. Yet none of the previous theories provide an outstanding, permanent definition or function of humor.

### 2.3. Benefits of Laughter and Humor

Recent researches showed that humor has a pivotal role in educational settings. Plenty of neuroscience, cognitive and educational studies reveal that the use of humor has several effects on students' psychological, physiological and social state (Henderson, 2015). Psychologically, humor and laughter in the classroom reduce tension, decrease anxiety, improve attention, retention, recall and enhance long-term memory. Physiologically, they help in lowering blood pressure, regulate respiration, stimulate circulation, as well as they serve to relax muscles. In addition, socially speaking, humor creates a relaxing environment for teachers and students to form a sense of belonging and rapport, motivates and engages students with the information being presented (Garner, 2006; Mantooth, 2010; Henderson, 2015; Ocon, 2015; Steele, 2017). Humor benefits can be clearly illustrated by Robinson, Smith, and Segal (2019) below:

Table 2 : THE BENEFITS OF LAUGHTER AND HUMOUR

Physical health benefits	Mental health benefits	Social benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boosts immunity</li> <li>• Lowers stress hormones</li> <li>• Decrease pain</li> <li>• Relaxes your muscles</li> <li>• Prevents heart disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adds joy and zest to life</li> <li>• Eases anxiety and tension</li> <li>• Relieves stress</li> <li>• Improves mood</li> <li>• Strengthens resilience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthens relationships</li> <li>• Attracts others to you</li> <li>• Helps defuse conflict</li> <li>• Promotes group bonding</li> </ul>

**SOURCE:** Robinson, L., Smith, M., Segal, J. (2019). Laughter is the best medicine. Retrieved from: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/laughter-is-the-best-medicine.htm>

The table groups the benefits of laughter and humor in general on three main aspects in individuals. Robinson and Smith investigated the effects of humor on humans' physical,



mental (cognitive/psychological) health, and on their social relations. Apparently, laughter has countless advantages that allow humans well-being to prosper.

As cited in Steele (2017), Lei, Cohen and Russler (2010) drew a conclusion to their study relating to the previous findings. They stated that: “Humor has psychological, social, and cognitive (educational) benefits”. Furthermore, “Humor has the power to make instructors more likeable, approachable, facilitate comprehension, increase attentiveness, improve creativity, and create social relationships” (p.326).

#### **2.4. Humor in ELT**

In addition to all the benefits humor provides to individuals and its applicability to all fields of study like: sociology, anthropology, psychology, and medicine, researchers highlighted its worth in education precisely in English as Foreign Language (EFL) and English as Second Language (ESL) teaching and learning (Aboudan, 2009; Olajoke, 2013; Benjelloun, 2009).

A great deal of studies and researches showed the effectiveness of incorporating humor as a strategy to foster students’ learning, creativity, and immediacy (Garner, 2006; Cayirdag & Acar, 2010; Gorham & Christophel, 1990). In contrast, Savage, Lujan, Thipparthi, and DiCarlo (2017) assumed that, indeed, humor and laughter provide a positive environment to boost learning, but not directly cause it.

Humor has a vital role in higher education as well. In fact, Morris (2008) reported that, in one hand, humor-based teaching is significantly more engaging and exiting for students. On the other hand, involving them in humorous communication can provoke a positive effect on the learning process (as cited in Streaan, 2011).

The sense of humor creates a vivid atmosphere and allows students to interact and communicate; therefore, Gatt (2000), as cited in Chee (2006), stated that:

It is the 'breathing-out of the soul'. When during the lesson the pupils only listen to the teacher, who may be teaching in the same tone, then it is as if they only breathe in and have no opportunity to breathe out. They need humor, which the teacher can find in very different places. Therefore the teacher must bring in humor during his lessons and this humor should result from the vitality and momentum of the lesson (para.2).

To put in another way, allowing students to laugh and be more engaged during lectures as long as the humor is relevant to the subject matter can boost English language teaching and learning.

## **2.5. Styles of Humor**

Humor is a uniquely personal trait that varies in style from one individual to another (Abadi, 2018). In 2003, Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, and Weir researched the use of humor and provided four main types of the latter. Their research presented a distinctive description of each type and its influence on others.

Chan, Hsu, Liao, Chen, Tu, and Wu (2018, p. 1) stated that: “Humor styles differ in terms of target (self or others) and motivation (benign or detrimental)”. Martin et al., (2003) classify the four trait-like humor styles as follows: the Affiliative and the Self-enhancing; which are considered as positive, adaptive and healthy, on the other side, there exist the negative and maladaptive styles of humor namely: the Aggressive and the Self-defeating (Ruch, Heintz, Platt, Wagner & Proyer, 2018)

### **2.5.1. Affiliative Humor**

Generally speaking, affiliative style of humor is greatly appreciated due to its impact on enhancing one's relationships with others. According to Martin (2007), it lowers 'interpersonal tension' and creates relaxing environment. Simply, affiliative humor refers to the funny things such as jokes (verbal) or gestures (non-verbal) which appear amusing and universal i.e., understood by the audiences (Riggio, 2015). He stated that the ultimate goal of this style is to: "create a sense of fellowship, happiness, and well-being" (para.1). A research conducted by Chan et al., (2018) revealed that, affiliative along with self-defeating humor styles have greater response in facilitating relationships with other people.

### **2.5.2. Self-Enhancing Humor**

Based on its title, this type of humor does not target others; however, it is straightforwardly produced to enhance and flatter one's self. Martin (2007) referred to self-enhancing humor as:

The tendency to maintain a humorous outlook on life even when one is not with other people, to be frequently amused by the incongruities of life, to maintain a humorous perspective even in the face of stress or adversity and to use humor in coping (e.g., My humorous outlook on life keeps me from getting overly upset or depressed about things (p.211).

In other words, this type of humor prevents its user(s) from being anxious, stressed, bored, and depressed. A self-enhanced person has the power over controlling one's and others' moods as well as creating a solid rapport with family and friends. Interestingly, the previous and current mentioned styles are considered as an effective coping as well as engaging strategy (Martin, 2007).

### **2.5.3. Aggressive Humor**

This type involves disparaging and lowering other peoples' self-esteem. It is mainly based on enhancing the self at the expense of others. According to DeLuca (2013) the user of this style tends to have a proclivity for sarcasm, tease, and humorously harm other individuals. Following the similar vein, Martin (2007) interpreted aggressive humor as a form of criticizing and underestimating people's well-being. He continued that it creates sense of superiority and offensiveness.

Berk (1998) referred to offensive humor as a high-risk if it is used spontaneously, because pre-prepared humor prevents offending peoples' race, ethnicity, gender, and religion. He divided offensive humor into two main categories: (1) Inappropriate targets; preferably to avoid put-downs of people no matter their status, profanity and vulgarity, sarcasm, ridicule, and highly sensitive issues such as sickness. (2) Appropriate targets; better to choose carefully the content which focuses on exaggerating over unreal practices and/or characteristics.

#### **2.5.4. Self-Defeating Humor**

“Probably one of the most convenient, safe, and non-offensive targets of humor is YOU” (Berk, 1998, p.47). According to Martin (2007), self-disparaging humor attempts to entertain others by composing jokes (verbal) or funny gestures (non-verbal) at the expense of oneself. Embracing oneself mistakes and foibles creates comfort and positive environment. Berk (1998) stated that:

Self-effacing or self-deprecating humor in the form of “self-downs” reveals your faults and weaknesses. This gives your audience a feeling of comfort to see their faults reflected in a person of power like their professor or speaker. This type of humor doesn't diminish their respect for you; in fact, it increases their respect, because you project a sense of confidence and security by being able to poke fun at yourself (p.47).

Humor styles are crucial in facilitating social relationships among people in general and among teachers and students in particular.

## **2.6. Forms of Humor Integrated in Classroom**

The use of humor in the classroom has a pivotal role in creating healthy and positive environment in order to break the ice between instructor and students. It promotes sense of belonging among students, and it maximizes learning (Berk, 1998). Humor heavily contributes in ameliorating the communication process (Price, 2005). As a matter of fact, communication break-down mostly occurs due to the existence of several differences between teachers and students like in status, title, age and other affecting factors (Berk, 1998).

Researchers and scholars (Bryant, Comisky, & Zillmann, 1979; Berk, 1998; Martin, 2007) indicated that humor comes in different forms: jokes, puns, anecdotes, riddles, one-liners. In addition to other creative form arouse in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: memes (Baysac, 2017).

### **2.6.1. Jokes**

“Telling jokes is only one way, and probably the most explicit way, to interject humor into a classroom” (Deiter, 2000. P.23). The term ‘joke’ firstly known and used in the late seventeenth century and it is of Latin origins ‘jocus’ (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1828). This latter defines joke as doing or saying ridiculous things that end with unexpected twist that provokes laughter. Basically, any joke is composed of a ‘build-up’; building the tension of story and its climax, and a ‘punch line’ i.e., the unexpected twist at the end (Hockett, 1972/1977). Following the same sense, Sherzer (1985) believed that joke is a discourse unit which comprises both the sat-up: the development of the record (dialogue or narrative), and the punch i.e., the sudden twist of event in the funny story (as cited in Dynel, 2009).

For example, a teacher enters his/her class and says: “Good morning everyone and welcome to mathematics class, I know you do not like it, -neither do I (whispering to

students) - but, we will survive”. It is clear that the teacher is being sarcastic and he used this joke as a starter to hook students’ attention and to raise their curiosity about how he will treat the material and make them like it. This example works better at the beginning of any class. Considering the fact that teachers are responsible for managing the classroom environment, and to certain degree, they control students’ attitude and anxiety level toward the subject, they have the power to start their class cheerfully and warm up their students by an “opening joke” (Berk, 1998). Jokes, according to Martin (2007), can be integrated during the course of normal conversations. He continued that:

...people like to amuse others by telling jokes, which are short, amusing stories ending in a punch line. These are sometimes referred to as “canned jokes” to distinguish them from the sorts of informal jesting and witty quips to which the word joke and joking can also refer to (p.11).

For further explanation, the archetype genre of verbal humor, i.e., orally produced humor in conversations, is referred to as “canned joke” (Dyrel, 2009). Long and Graesser (1988, p.49) provided a joke of this kind:

A man goes to a psychiatrist who gives him a battery of tests. Then he announces his findings. “I’m sorry to have to tell you that you are hopelessly insane.” “Hell,” says the client, indignantly, “I want a second opinion.” “Okay,” says the doctor, “you’re ugly too” (as cited in Martin, 2007. P.11).

The setup is the entire joke but the last statement “I want a second opinion...” at this point the story takes a shift and turns this doctor-patient relationship into a nonsensical one. This twist is called the punch line which is regarded as humorous and could provoke laughter.

### **2.6.2. Anecdotes**

According to Online Etymology Dictionary, the term “anecdote” was used since 1670’s, meaning “secrete or private stories”. It comes from the Latin “anecdota” and “anekdota” in

Greek; which means unpublished things. Berk (1998) referred to anecdotes as “stories or descriptions of personal experiences that are true, with maybe a little exaggeration, are excellent icebreakers to warm up an audience” (p.36). Similarly, other studies (Benson, 2000; Lukey-Coutsocostas and Tanner-Bogia, 1998) indicated that inserting this form of humor in written and/or spoken records grasps the audience attention (as cited in Çopur, 2008).

Çopur (2008) stated that anecdotes are significant as a strategy in second language classroom; in which, it maximizes context-memorization. Furthermore, she concluded her investigation stressing on the fact that:

Anecdotes are inseparable parts of authentic everyday conversation, and they are an effective technique for written and oral presentations. Since teaching is a never-ending presentation in front of different and sometimes difficult audiences, using anecdotes can be a useful and rewarding technique that should be integrated into classroom language teaching. This integration has fruitful results both for target language development and social interaction in the classroom (p.39).

This form of humor, as a technique, has some challenges, most threatening ones are: (1) failure to appropriately identify funny stories, (2) the art of delivery, i.e., the success of telling a story does not only depend on the twist; as matter of fact, humor may be provoked through the delivery per se ( Berk, 1998). Any teaching strategy requires certain considerations to be taken in advance. In the case of implementing anecdotes in classroom, Çopur (2008) stated these worth-noting points to guide teachers:

- Be authentic/ honest while sharing your personal story.
- Be careful about local and national culture and avoid offending students whether physically or psychologically.
- Anecdotes need to be related to students’ cognitive development and intellectual level.

- Extremely important criteria are length and timing of anecdotes. Anecdotes should not be long stories otherwise students will lose their concentration. Additionally, their time should not exceed 3 to 4 minutes maximum.
- Allow students to participate in cracking jokes and narrate their personal stories in order to create a communicative environment.
- Be flexible and be natural.

### **2.6.3. Memes**

Meme is “an amusing or interesting item (such as a captioned picture or video) or genre of items that is spread widely online especially through social media” (Merriam-Webster, 1828). According to Baysac (2017), memes are trending phenomena introduced as a strategy in teaching/learning to escalate enthusiasm in students. This form of humor needs to be addressed carefully because it contains and requires certain degree of cultural background/knowledge and witticism to interpret a meme. Furthermore, Miller (2017) provided four main significant ways to integrate memes within lessons which repeatedly are: memes as icebreakers, as classroom rules, as introducing concepts, and as a tool for analysis; analyzing linguistic items and patterns for instance.

## **2.7. Humor Competence**

The term competence is perceived differently to several scholars. Chomsky, for instance, focused and limited competence to grammaticality, whereas others like Katz and Foder, broaden it to involve even semantic notion (Attardo, 1994). According to Attardo (1994), the humor phenomenon is overlooked by the previously mentioned scholars and many others while developing Communicative Competence (CC).



Although humor is inherent in all human beings, it varies from one individual to another and it differs from one culture to another. In Vega (1990), humor production and comprehension requires a well-defined competence. Additionally, he mentioned that second and foreign language learners in particular are unable to develop Humor Competence (HC) even if they reach advanced levels. In point of fact, there is a notable lack in literature concerning the notion of humor competence and its importance precisely in EFL/ESL.

Humor competence (HC) encompasses a great deal of competencies; according to Vega (1990) (HC) is regarded as the fifth component of communicative competence along with the other four competencies (grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse). He stated that: "It involves knowledge of the semantic mechanisms of humor, grammar, discourse rules, communication strategies, social norms of language use, and world knowledge" (n.n). Additionally, Vega (1990) concluded that the capacity of interpreting and responding to humorous materials changes from one learner to another due to the fact that the capacity includes psychological factors, significantly: intelligence and personality.

Hodson (2014) defined humor competence as: "the capacity to recognize and understand humour, is an important aspect of semantic and pragmatic competence for advanced language learners" (p.149). In his paper, he argued about the plan, implementation, and results of a one-semester program in humor competence for college EFL understudies, employing a combination of unequivocal teaching of humor theories and information pattern, instructor- and learner-led analysis of humorous writings, and learners presentations. He further supported his stand by Bell's argument (2014), as cited in Hodson, (2014), which stated that: "Both the use and understanding of humor represent a formidable linguistic and cultural challenge to language learners, yet it is crucial that they meet this challenge, given the important role humor plays in human interaction" (p.149).

The work of Hodson (2014) followed Attardo's definition of humor competence (as cited in Hodson, 2014):

the capacity of a speaker to process semantically a given text and to locate a set of relationships among its components, such that he/she would identify the text (or part of it) as humorous in an ideal situation. This humor competence is analogous and in fact part of the semantic competence of speakers: being able to recognize a sentence as funny is a skill equivalent (but not identical, of course), for example, to being able to recognize a sentence as synonymous with another sentence (p.150).

His study consisted of 3 groups:

**Group A:** 32 third-year EFL students in private university in Japan.

**Group B:** 124 students majoring in international relations, cross-cultural communication, and nursing in public university in Japan.

**Group C:** 11 native speakers of English language from the United States studying Japanese language and culture in private university in the same country.

The researcher presented courses concerning humor theories and exposed students to different humorous texts. He compared between the three groups and found that even though group A rated high score in understanding humorous writings, students were unable to distinguish humorous from non-humorous texts and according to Hodson, that outcome would satisfy Attardo's definition of humor competence.

## **2.8. Humor Subjectivity**

Humor is such a complex and a sophisticated phenomenon that requires in-depth investigation. In fact, according to Garner (2003) humor is subjective. He demonstrated that: "Humor can be tricky because it can be highly personal, subjective, and contextual and we do not always know the way it will be received" (para.22). Precisely speaking, the sense of

humor is like any other senses that humans have, its production and understanding differs from one individual to another. For example, humorous materials may be amusing and ironic to some people, but they may be perceived as cliché and not funny to others. i.e., each person has a peculiar perception to what is humorous (Garner, 2003).

Furthermore, TED (2013) stated that: “nobody is ever satisfied a hundred percent with humor” (0:37). Additionally, TED (2013), to certain extent, believed that a joke will satisfy some people and offend others, because according to him nothing is universally funny. He also referred to the mood as an important factor that influences and interferes with the perception of a joke or any other forms of humor.

According to several studies (Hodson, 2014; Garner, 2010; Berk, 2002; Chee, 2003), the perception, comprehension, production and appreciation of humorous materials are affected by several factors namely: age, gender, culture, personality, and intelligence. Due to the sensitivity of these factors and the subjectivity of humor, the teacher, should be constantly aware and careful while using humor in the classroom. Because as Garner (2003) stated: “it is not the humor per se, it is the effective use of humor that is key” (para.24). Simply put, the use of humor can be most effective when it is appropriate and targets the subject matter.

## **2.9. Humorous Materials on Syllabus**

Syllabus determines what and how the class will be like for the whole semester. Traditionally, teachers are responsible for submitting this formal, stressful format to their students in first day of class. Berk (1998) believed that syllabus is, by no means, the most boring handout that students can ever have. On the basis of his experience as a professor, he introduced the idea of using humorous materials on six elements of syllabus, namely: 1) Title; in fact, it is interesting to use funny comments or to “place a descriptor commonly used on

food and household product” under course title. (FAT FREE), for instance, meaning that the subject is not heavy but easy to understand instead. 2) Prerequisites; is to insert certain incongruity to the prior conditions in the syllabus, in order to address them in a less serious manner. 3) Professor’s credentials; is another technique teacher can use to poke fun at his/her degrees and rank to break the ice. In this case, self-effacing humor suits best to break communication barriers. This later is considered as the ultimate teachers’ goal. 4) Office hours; the section where teacher is supposed to mention his/her availability outside the class. For example, days off announcement like: ‘Closed Sunday for mental repairs’ i.e., being serious with Sundays and twisting the information unexpectedly by ‘mental repair’ meaning to rest from the tiring job (teaching). 5) Teaching strategies; adding extra surprising and creative methods such as: small groups, movies, exposing them to natives, standup comedy, in classroom can create a positive attitude in relation to the course. 6) Reading list; referring to the references or the biography that students require to read in order to use them in their researches and studies; however, this last technique is less important and ineffective in reducing students stress.

These above mentioned techniques identified by Berk (1998) work better if they are used in the first page of syllabus for the sake of attracting students’ attention, as well as creating funny and jocular situations especially in first days because they leave good impression on students about teachers.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter mainly focused on the effectiveness of humor as a technique that boosts students’ attention, involvement, and learning. The majority of authors stressed upon humor in general and only little accounts were provided on how teachers apply it in their classes. Specifically speaking, making humorous pauses during lectures is of great importance that

students need in nonstop, stressful, and boring courses. Humor is a multidimensional strategy; in which its correct use can lead to pleasing achievements, or the other way out, i.e. it results unacceptable behaviors and attitudes.

## **CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

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## **Introduction**

This chapter is devoted to the practical part of the present study undertaken to explore teachers and students' perceptions toward using humorous pauses to foster students' engagement. This latter represented the field work i.e., the analysis and discussion of the gathered data. Additionally, this part of the work addressed a rationale concerning the research methodology including several, crucial steps namely: research approach, design, sample, piloting, administration, description, and data collecting tools' analysis. In nutshell, this chapter aimed at demonstrating the findings along with the purpose of answering the research questions and whether to support or refute their hypotheses/ predictions afterwards.

### **3.1. Research Methodology: Choices and Rationale**

#### **3.1.1. Research Approach**

The mode of enquiry of this research is qualitative. According to Kothari (2004) the qualitative approach to research is "concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour", he added: "Research in such a situation is a function of researcher's insights and impressions" (p. 5). Since qualitative approach's explicit goal is to explore the perceptions and views of participants concerning the subject under study, as Dornyei (2007) stated, the researcher adopted this research approach to better reach the main objective of this study which was exploring teachers and students' views concerning the use of humorous pauses as a technique to enhance EFL student engagement.

#### **3.1.2. Research Design**

The present research design can be described as exploratory in nature which falls under the qualitative research phase. According to Crotty (1998) the choice of the appropriate research design of a given study depends upon the objectives of the research per se, so that answering the research questions can be attainable (as cited in Boru, 2018). Additionally, as Robson (2002) believed, there are three possible research designs, namely: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (as cited in Boru, 2018). Based on Robson fact and due to the nature of the questions (how, to what extent, what) and the objective of our study, which is exploring teachers and students' views concerning the use of humorous pauses, the researcher trusted and believed that exploratory research design was the suitable design to follow.

### **3.1.3. The Sample**

The present study was undertaken in order to explore teachers and students' views and perceptions toward the use of humorous pauses as a technique that enhances students' engagement and prevents boredom. The researcher used volunteer sampling technique as procedure to gather necessary data. Alvi (2016) stated that volunteer sampling is when: "The members of the sample self-select themselves for being part of the study" (p.28). The sample consists of 17 teachers from both branches (Science of language and Civilization and literature) and 52 students from all levels (both branches as well). Moreover, teachers' experience in teaching English and students' journey in learning English language give advantageous and benefic results. Their responses were collected in order to deeply study their perceptions concerning the subject area and to see if they appreciate the use of humorous pauses, to investigate the extent to which they view it as an effective strategy and to explore the type of engagement that can be mostly affected by the suggested strategy.

### **3.1.4. Data Collection Tools**



In the first place, the researcher opted for two data gathering tools: questionnaires and classroom observation. It was intended to observe teachers and students' attitudes as well as reactions, and compare between teachers who use humor in classroom and those who do not. However, due to the lack of exposure that was caused by the out-breaking of Corona-virus Covid-19 pandemic, classroom observation seemed to be impossible. For this reason and in addition to teachers' questionnaire, classroom observation was replaced by students' questionnaire instead. For clarification, the researcher specifically opted for semi-structured questionnaire (includes open & closed-ended questions) which is commonly used in qualitative research.

#### **3.1.4.1. Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ):**

Martin, Puhalik-Doris, Larsen, Gray and Weir (2003) defined (HSQ) as “a measure designed to distinguish between potentially beneficial and detrimental humor styles” (p.211). Simply put, Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) is a 32-items measure, these items are rated on 5-point Likert scale (from 1 strongly agree to 5 strongly disagree). After ticking the items, the test reveals the results at the end. The main focus of this measure is on individuals' spontaneous use of humor in their daily life.

Martin et al. (2003) developed their multidimensional approach (HSQ) that was consisted of four main types of humor: Affiliative and Self-enhancing (adaptive-positive), in addition to Aggressive and Self-defeating (maladaptive-negative). The four dimensions of humor styles that were developed by Martin and his colleagues were clearly defined in chapter2.

As an initial step, teachers were asked to test their sense of humor through the online (HSQ) and then to take screenshots of their results and send them to the researcher. After completing the first step, immediately they were asked to fill the researcher's self-structured

questionnaire as a second and a final step. (HSQ) was only directed to teachers and it was considered as required step before they answer the fundamental questionnaire of our research.

In sum, the main purpose of including (HSQ) in our study was in order to see approximately what sense of humor is most dominant and common among EFL teachers at Biskra University. In addition, to explore how does teachers' sense of humor, which is part of their personality treat, influence students in classroom.

#### **3.1.4.2. Questionnaires**

Due to exceptional conditions the world in general and Algeria in particular are suffering from because of Covid-19 disease, the researcher kept the pace with one data collection tool, precisely the (HSQ) and two other self- elaborated questionnaires. The first ones were directed to teachers and the other one to students seeking their views and perceptions concerning our subject.

Brown (2001) clearly defines questionnaires as “any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers” ( as cited in Dornyei, 2003. P, 6). The main reason behind choosing this tool was heavily based upon Dornyei's belief that: “the vast majority of research projects in the behavioral and social sciences involve at one stage or another collecting some sort of questionnaire data” (2003. P, 10). In addition to that, the researcher opted for questionnaires because they served the current situation in first place and helped in reaching as much views as possible to enrich this research study. Another significant reason was to gather respondents' factual, behavioral and attitudinal data which helped in answering our research questions.

#### **3.1.5. Validating and Piloting Questionnaires**

According to Dornyei (2003), Well-constructed questionnaires help in processing information rapidly and relatively to the point. Simply speaking, the development of well-structured questionnaire requires the important steps of validating and piloting. In validating data stage, the researcher handed both questionnaires to the supervisor in order to check the questions' appropriateness and effectiveness in targeting the area.

Nevertheless, for piloting, as Dornyei (2003) stated, is a stepwise process that permits researchers to gather reviews about the form and content of the questionnaire, and whether the questions appropriately target the issue. He also added that any endeavor to skip the piloting stage would jeopardize the quality of good questionnaire. For this reason, the researcher submitted the instrument followed by an opinionnaire to three expert teachers and to some Master Two students in the field of EFL at Biskra University, as well as to a PhD student in United Kingdom. Their feedback helped in adding, editing and omitting certain aspects concerning the questionnaires' form as well as content and certain unfamiliar terms were provided with brief definitions. At last, due to the already mentioned health issue Covid-19 pandemic which made reaching respondents in person impossible, the researcher emailed and shared both questionnaires via the internet.

### **3.1.6. The Administration of the Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were submitted to participants online; some teachers were emailed and others were reached through their Facebook accounts, whereas students, on the other hand, were reached by Facebook groups because it was the only access to be found due to covid-19 pandemic. Questionnaires were designed online by Google Forms survey software. The platform facilitates to questions' structure such as: multiple choice, open and closed-ended questions, Likert scale. During three weeks, only 17 teachers and 52 students responded.

### 3.1.7. The Description of the Questionnaires

In order to better investigate this study, I opted for the worldwide used (HSQ) developed by Martin et al. (2003) to research the common humor style among teachers of English language at Biskra University. Furthermore, the researcher elaborated two well-structured questionnaires (for teachers & students) to make an in-depth exploration about teachers and students' views as well as opinions toward using humorous pauses to engage, energize and motivate students.

**Section I :** General information (four items for teachers & three for students)

This section gathered factual data about the participants. Teachers' section contained: gender, qualification and two specific open questions about their teaching experience as EFL teachers at University level. Whereas students' section, on the other hand, sought their gender, age and a specific open question on which they describe their journey as EFL students at University level. This section of the questionnaires helps in providing further knowledge about teachers and students backgrounds.

**Section II :** Teachers and students' perceptions of students' engagement in EFL classroom (six items for teachers & eight for students)

The second section of both questionnaires collected different opinions, beliefs, facts, and attitudes from participants (teachers & students). I provided teachers with a variety of questions: close-ended questions with options, a multiple choice item and open-ended questions followed by justifications that seek their opinions about managing students' engagement and disengagement at university, students' attendance, the role of teacher' personality and its effects on students' behavior in the classroom. In the same section, I posed

a specific open-question to teachers concerning the strategies they use in the classroom in order to foster students' engagement.

On the other hand, students were directed initially by easy, behavioral question concerning skipping classes followed by suggestions explain such behavior to tick. Furthermore, I provided them with open form of questions where they can provide their own definitions to the concept "students' engagement" and specify, according to them, reasons for teachers' failure to engage students in the classroom. In addition to other questions that heavily seek their opinions, attitudes and views concerning the use of humor in engaging students.

**Section III:** Teachers and students' views concerning the use of humor and humorous pauses in EFL classroom to enhance students' engagement (sixteen items for teachers & thirteen for students)

In the present section, teachers and students were provided with factual, behavioral and attitudinal questions that vary in structure. Starting with close-ended questions seek straightforward answers (yes/no) about their use of humor in the classroom and whether or not their sense of humor affect student engagement, followed by blank spaces for justifications. Moreover, it aimed at exploring to what extent they believe that the use of humorous pauses could be a successful technique in breaking students' boredom in EFL classes, and how they view the idea of incorporating this strategy to enhance students' engagement.

**Section IV:**

**Teachers:** Further Suggestions (one item)

Teachers were provided with this section to address further suggestions and insights concerning the topic under investigation to enrich the quality of the research.

**Students:** Students' views about the effect of humorous pauses on the three types of engagements (four items)

In this fourth section of students' questionnaire, the researcher provided participants with three tables. Each table included three close-ended items that target a specific type of engagement and its relation with humorous pauses. The ultimate purpose of this section was to explore what type of engagement is mostly affected by the use of humorous pauses in students. In addition, students were presented with a free space where they can comment and provide further suggestions.

### **3.1.8. Data Analysis**

In fact, qualitative research encompasses a variety of analytical approaches (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Based on the nature of the study, the researcher opted for thematic-based analysis approach. According to Dawson (2009), thematic analysis is highly inductive and the researcher deals with the themes emerging from data of the participants. She classified this type of analysis as highly qualitative. On the other hand, the specific open questions were analyzed by using a content analysis approach. The researcher opted for this method in reference to Dornyei (2003) who said that: "specific open questions usually ask about factual information that is easy to summarize" (p.116).i.e., content analysis summarizes rather than reports the entire details. Furthermore, data statistics and percentages were calculated manually. As for the tables, pie charts, bar charts, they were created by using Microsoft Word.

## **3.2. Results of the Study**

### **3.2.1. Teachers' Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) Results**

The (HSQ) was directed mainly to teachers to undertake and be aware of the sense of humor they possess. The main objective of using this scale measurement is to expand

teachers' horizons toward humor and let them discover their personal sense of humor because this would encourage them to be less afraid of exposing their fun personality. In addition, it spurs them to adopt humorous pauses as an efficient technique to create rapport and comfortable atmosphere for teaching and learning. The majority, (14 out of 17), of teachers possess an affiliative sense of humor. According to Martin et al. (2003), this type of humor is most appreciated among individuals and the specialists of humor studies, because it is a positive type and it is not based on humiliating or offending others. i.e., it is a peaceful and a positive humor. The results of (HSQ) are further developed in the following teachers' questionnaire, specifically in question 21 (table 22).

### 3.2.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

#### Section One: General Information

**Question1.** Would you specify your gender please?

*Table 3*

*Teachers' gender distribution*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Female	7	41%
Male	10	59%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

As the table above reports, (17) shape the total number of teachers who volunteered to answer the questionnaire. The respondents were 10 males (59%) and 7 females (41%). Apparently, male and female teachers were close from being equal in participation; however, males exceeded females' participation. It is evident that gender mirrors different ways of

thinking and perception, for this reason, male teachers' understanding and production of humorous pauses is to certain extent different from females' and vice versa.

**Question2.** Would you specify your qualification, please?

*Table 4*

*Teachers' qualification*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Master	2	12%
Magister	9	53%
Doctorate	6	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

This question does not put any weight to the study; however, it provides the researcher with background knowledge about the participants. It is clear from the table that only 2 (12%) teachers qualified with master degree, 9 out of 17 teachers have magister degree (53%), and 6 i.e. (35%) of PhD holders.

**Question3.** How long have you been teaching English as Foreign Language?

*Table 5*

*Teachers' years of experience in teaching English as foreign language (TEFL)*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	9	53%
6-10 years	2	12%
More than 10 years	6	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>



The table displays a significant variety in participants' years of teaching experience. It is observed that the majority of respondents 9 (53%) are novice teachers who experienced teaching in a period from 1-5 years. Next, 2 participants (12%) have a considerable teaching experience that goes from 6-10 years. Whereas the rest 6 of participants (35%) are considered as experts because their teaching experience as EFL teachers exceeds 10 years. Teachers' teaching experience heavily affects the appropriate and inappropriate use of humor in the classroom, due to the fact that experienced teachers (experts) are familiar with different students' personalities and are aware of the teaching and learning process as well.

**Question4.** How can you describe your experience as an EFL teacher at university?

In this question, teachers were asked to describe their experience as EFL teachers at the university level. Teachers communicated their thoughts and stated specific adjectives to describe their experience that were categorized as follows: teaching experience was **insightful; exciting; exhausting; satisfactory; motivating; gratifying; encouraging; challenging; good; short; rich; fruitful; excellent; positive; appreciated; interesting; engaging.**

## **Section Two: Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Engagement in EFL Classroom**

**Question5.** How do you consider managing students' engagement at university level?

*Table 6*

*Teachers' opinions about managing student engagement at university level*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Crucial	16	94%
Optional	1	6%

Needless	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table exhibits almost a complete agreement concerning the cruciality of managing students' engagement for advanced learners (university level). It is shown that 16 participants out of 17 (94%) view that handling the engagement of students is equally pivotal even at university. They strongly justified their answers by providing the following: managing students' engagement is crucial because nowadays classrooms are learner-centered. i.e., students need to be involved in the teaching/learning process. Lessons would be boring, useless and the teaching methods would be meaningless as well if students are disengaged; therefore, the teacher cannot really teach in such an environment. Furthermore, if students are not engaged, the course objectives will not be met and their high level of thinking skills will not be promoted.

As it is observed from the same table, only one participant believes that managing students' engagement at university level is optional. He supports his opinion by stating that students cannot be fully engaged because they are mature and they take charge of themselves. He adds that their interests heavily depend on the module and the teacher.

**Question6.** While teaching, do you believe that your students are?

*Table 7*

*Teachers' opinions about the degree of their students' engagement*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Engaged	6	35%
Somehow engaged	11	65%
Disengaged	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the statistics the table carries, 11 teachers believe that their students are somewhat engaged while teaching, this forms (65%) of the total and which is considered as an important percentage. On the other hand, (35%) i.e. 6 participants view that their students are engaged in the process of teaching and learning. At the end, none of the participants (0) seem to believe that their students are disengaged at all (0%).

**Question7.** How often do your students skip your classes?

*Table 8*

*Frequency of students' absenteeism*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Always	0	0%
Sometimes	10	58%
Rarely	6	35%
Never	1	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

As matter of fact, students' disengagement in the classroom may be one of the great causes of students' absenteeism, for this reason, question 7 was a key question to investigate other related causes of students' disengagement. As the table above displays, participants state that students frequently do not always skip their classes; option (a) has (0%) percentage which is a positive matter. On the other hand, the majority of participants, (10), state the fact that their students sometimes do such behavior (58%) which is considered as a high percentage. In option (c) for instance, (6) teachers confirm that their students rarely skip their classes, whereas only one (6%) participant assumes that all his students attend his class.

**Question8.** What are the main teaching strategies you use in order to foster students' engagement in the classroom?

This specific open question was directed to teachers in order to have a clear idea about the teaching methods and strategies that EFL teachers of Biskra University use to enhance students' engagement in the classroom. The participants' responses are summarized as follows:

- They sometimes use humor such as: anecdotal warm ups and jokes.
- They diversify and contextualize the syllabus, use variation of classroom activities, deal with updated topics, engage them with the teaching process.
- Debates, discussions, group work, maximizing their talk and minimizing the teacher's, experiential learning, asking direct questions, games.
- Allow them to be themselves around in the classroom, motivate, attract, advise, and threaten them, extra marks.

**Question9.** Do you think that students' disengagement is due to?

*Table 9*

*Causes of students' disengagement from teachers' point of view*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Nonstop hours of explanation	0	0%
Heavy subjects (sophisticated concepts and notions)	0	0%
Inappropriate timing (mornings/ afternoons)	4	24%
Teachers' passive way of delivering information	2	12%
Teaching strategies and techniques	2	12%
All of them	2	12%
More than one option	7	40%

<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>
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As the table reports, the participants' responses vary. As noticed, (7) teachers i.e. (40%) have chosen more than one statement that seem to cause students' disengagement. In addition, it is worth noting that 4 participants view the inappropriate timing of sessions (mornings/ afternoons) as a great influencing factor which to (24%) affects students' presence as well as engagement. Options (d), (e), and (f), on the other hand, have an equal percentage (12%) which is considered as an important percentage. The researcher added other option as a free space in this question for participants to desirably state other causes of students' disengagement, they provided the next:

- Inadequate environment; hot weather, uncomfortable setting, hunger
- The heavy curriculum and repeated lessons
- Students' personality. i.e., shy students and being dogmatic by nature.
- Lack of motivation and carelessness by the part of students per se.

**Question10.** According to you, do you believe that a teacher's personality affects students' behaviors in the classroom?

*Table 10*

*Teachers' opinions about whether teacher's personality affects students' behaviors in the classroom or not*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	100%
No	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

Apparently, all the 17 participants (100%) agree upon the fact that the teacher's personality affects students' behaviors in the classroom. Teacher is believed to be the first factor that impacts students whether positively or negatively, and students' engagement, behaviors, and attitudes heavily depend upon the teacher's personality and character. Briefly, the researcher quoted some impressive justifications provided by teachers expressing their beliefs and impressions of their teachers when they were students:

- **Justification 1:**

Well, if you were taught by Dr. "X" you would understand the situation. She is like a long nightmare, like a doctor's waiting room with a lot of crying babies. Now, compare her with Dr. "Y", the man is like a character coming from Jane Austin's novel. You will attend his session even if it was Christmas Eve.

- **Justification 2:**

Because I believe that teacher personality is a key component in student learning. Teachers who continuously try to construct effective relationships with their students can create an enthusiastic learning environment where they can act as both teachers and educators. A teacher with a good personality is someone whom, I think, tries to stimulate and strengthen effective communication, instructional strategies and most importantly work on his/her social skills like respect, active listening, and cross-cultural understanding, if necessary.

### **Section Three: Teachers' Views Concerning the Use of Humor and Humorous Pauses in EFL Classrooms**

**Question11.** Do you think that teacher's sense of humor affects students' engagement?

*Table 11*

*Teachers' opinions about whether teacher's sense of humor affects students' engagement or not*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	100%
No	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above table displays a definite (100%) agreement among the participants concerning the teacher's sense of humor on students' engagement. The researcher further posed a sub-question of question 11 seeks the specific type of engagement that can be heavily affected by the teacher's sense of humor.

**Sub-question 11.** If yes, what type (s) of engagement is mostly affected in students? You may choose more than one suggestion.

*Table 12*

*Type (s) of engagement that teacher's sense of humor affects the most in students*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Behavioral engagement	0	0%
Emotional engagement	4	24%
Cognitive engagement	0	0%
All of them	13	76%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the table 12, it is observed that 13 participants (76%) strongly believe that a teacher's sense of humor equally targets and influences, with no exception, all types of engagements (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive). Whereas the rest 4 participants believe that the teacher's sense of humor mostly touches the emotional engagement in students. 24% is

considered as a significant percentage which indicates that students' affective engagement in the classroom is of great importance.

**Question12.** Do you use humor while teaching?

*Table 13*

*Teachers' responses about whether they use humor while teaching or not*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	100%
No	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

Surprisingly the table shows that all of the 17 participants, (100%) use humor while teaching. These results indicate that teachers are aware of its importance in educational settings. It is noticed from the teachers' justifications that they emphasize on a crucial aspect while using humor which is "humor appropriateness". They believe that humorous materials must be carefully selected, taking into account the context in which it takes place. Besides, teachers also heavily focused on the use of humor as a means of relaxing, releasing tension, and creating a positive environment rather than a means that fosters retention and recall. For example, a teacher participant stated that:

Humor is a good way to break the ice, have a good relationship with students, attract students' attention, and provide a relaxing atmosphere. It is also a way to make a pause especially when the students seem to have some difficulties understanding the lesson or do a task or they had a tiring day and are less active and concentrated humor brings a fresh air to the environment. It is a way to reduce their stress and increase their motivation and engagement in the course.



**Question13.** Which form(s) of humor do you use in your classroom? You can tick more than one answer.

*Table 14*

*Forms of humor Teachers use in the classroom*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Jokes	0	0%
Anecdotes	0	0%
Funny comments	0	0%
Funny stories	0	0%
Memes	0	0%
Puns	0	0%
Riddles	0	0%
All of them	2	12%
More than one form	15	88%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

Since (100%) of teachers use humor while teaching, it is significant to ask them what forms of humor they use in the classroom. From the table above, it is observed that 15 teachers vary in the use of humor. i.e., they use more than one form of humor. Whereas 2 of them, who form (12%), use all the above mentioned forms (jokes, anecdotes, funny comments, funny stories, memes, puns, and riddles).

**Question14.** To what extent do you believe that using form(s) of humor could be successful in EFL classrooms?

*Table 15*

*The degree of using form(s) of humor in EFL classrooms successfulness*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
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Very successful	7	41%
Successful	9	53%
Unsuccessful	1	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

Evidently the table displays that 9 (53%) participants out of 17 (100%) perceive using forms of humor in EFL classes as successful, 7 (41%) participants, on the other hand, believe it can be very successful, whereas only one (6%) participant has a negative position toward incorporating humor in any ways. The participants have further expressed their opinions by stating the following:

**a) Teachers' opinion for "very successful"**

- It increases motivation, class attendance and task performance.
- Students need to take some rest during explanations.
- Students need to take some rest during explanations.

**b) Teachers' opinion for "successful"**

- Successful but: "Not really to a large extent, they might love the teacher, but not necessarily be engaged in the lecture".
- Successful but: "The success of humor can depend on the context or students' understanding of jokes. I worked with international students and sometimes you need a level of intercultural competence to succeed in making students react".

**c) Teachers' opinion for "unsuccessful"**

- Students feel they can cross some lines.

**Question15.** Please, select one statement that you support the most.

*Table 16*

*Teachers' belief about the effect of humorous pauses*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Using humorous pauses is indispensable in EFL classrooms	1	6%
Humorous pauses negatively affect the seriousness of the teaching/learning process	1	6%
Humorous pauses foster healthy and positive environment for students' engagement	12	70%
Humorous pauses are mostly needed to break communication barriers between teacher-students and students-students	3	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

Teachers at this point were introduced to the core of the study which is the use of humorous pauses. (70%) i.e., 12 participants selected option (c), other 3 teachers out of 17 believe that humorous pauses are mostly needed to break communication obstacles between teacher and members of the class. On the other hand, there was a participant (6%) who extremely believes that the use of humorous pauses is positive, indispensable and crucial in EFL classrooms, whereas another one perceives that the use of humorous pauses is negative and it hinders the seriousness of the teaching/ learning processes.

**Question16.** How do you use humorous pauses?

*Table 17*

*Teachers' way of using humorous pauses*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Intentionally (pre-prepared/ on purpose)	0	0%
Spontaneously (naturally)	12	70%
Both	5	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the table above, it is observed that 12 participants out of 17, i.e. (70%) use humorous pauses spontaneously. They believe that it is impossible to plan for humor and students appreciate honest, genuine and real jokes instead of artificial ones. While this may be true, a respectful number of participants 5 (30%) use humor in both ways (intentionally and spontaneously). These teachers voice that they cannot predict students' mood so they use it naturally to motivate and intentionally to lessen embarrassment and break the ice. In addition, they strongly believe humor is content-dependent.

**Question17.** Are your humorous pauses:

*Table 18*

*Types of teachers' humorous pauses*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Content-related	16	94%
Non content-related	1	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

Most participants 16 state that their humor is heavily related to the content they present in the classroom. On the contrary, only one participant uses it independently from the subject matter. This reveals that (94%) of teachers prefer to use subject-related humor in order not to deviate from the core of the lecture; otherwise they lose control over the situation.

**Question18.** Which of the following do you think students appreciate the most?

*Table 19*

*Students' most appreciated types of humorous pauses from teachers' point of view*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Content-related humorous pauses	11	65%
Non content-related humorous pauses	6	35%

<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>
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(65%) of teachers believe that students appreciate humor which serves the content more; for example, a content-related joke that helps them understand a grammatical pattern. On the other hand, the table displays important statistics, 6 participants out of 17 think that students are more satisfied with non content-related humor, simply because they would like to breathe out knowledge. i.e., relax.

**Question19.** How can you evaluate your students' reactions when you pause to say something funny?

*Table 20*

*Teachers' evaluation of their students' reactions when pausing to say something funny*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	16	94%
Negative	1	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

(94%) of the participants assert that their students react positively whenever they pause and present something funny; nevertheless, one participant out of 17 in total states that students do not appreciate this behavior and react negatively toward such action.

**Question20.** How often do you tolerate students' use of humor in your classroom?

*Table 21*

*Frequency of teachers' tolerance of students' use of humor in the classroom*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Always	4	24%
Sometimes	13	76%

Rarely	0	0%
Never	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

Statistics displayed in the table above reveals that, on a large scale, (76%) of teachers tolerate students' use of humor in the classroom but not to a large extent. They believe that humor is context-related and its use is welcomed as long as it is used appropriately whether by teachers and students. i.e., it should neither be aggressive nor negatively targets a specific category of individuals. Whereas, the first option, "always", was frequently repeated 4 times. Participants who have selected this option believe that if the teacher uses it, then students can use it as well. Additionally they state that: "Humour is the salt of the classroom without it the lesson gets boring even for the teacher".

**Question21.** After undertaking the Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ), would you tell us what your sense of humor is according to the results of the test?

*Table 22*

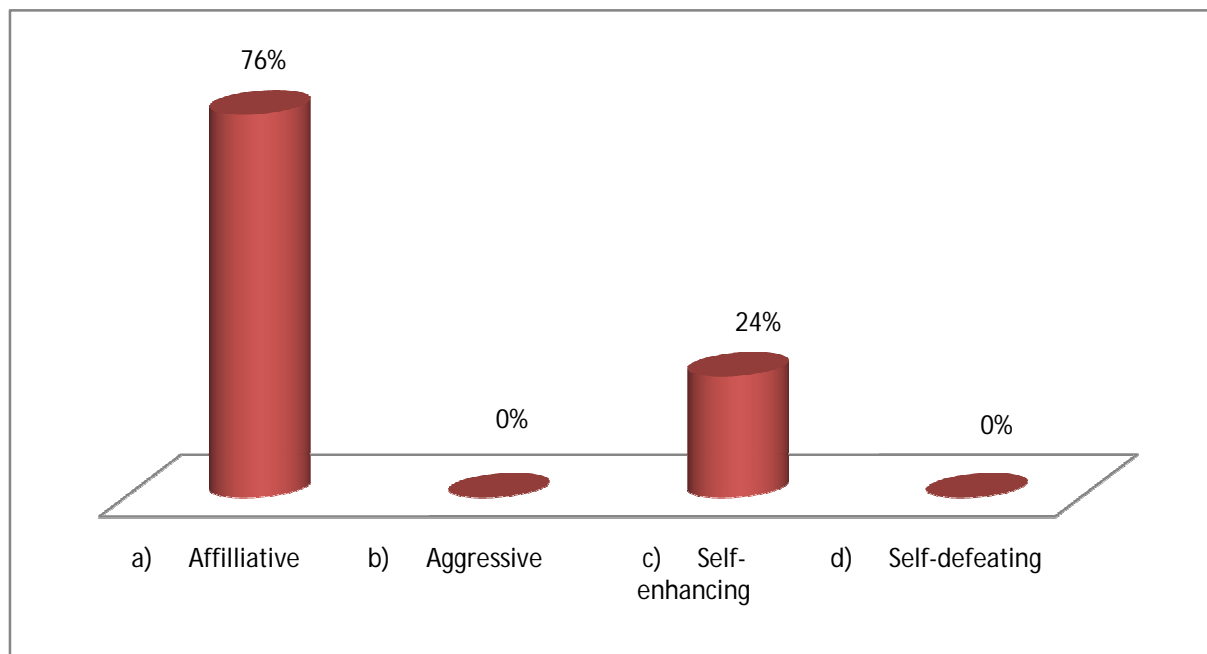
*Teachers' Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) results*

Humor Styles	Frequency	Percentage
Affiliative sense of humor	14	82%
Self-enhancing sense of humor	2	12%
Aggressive sense of humor	1	6%
Self-defeating sense of humor	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

The participants were provided with the link to undertake the online (HSQ) test, screenshot the results and email them back to the researcher. As the table above states, teachers approximately share a similar sense of humor by (82%), which is the Affiliative sense of

humor. (12%) possess a self-enhancing type and (6%) i.e. one participant has an aggressive sense of humor. It is deduced that the majority have a positive sense of humor; and therefore, a positive personality.

**Question22.** As an EFL teacher, which type of humor do you believe is most appropriate in EFL classrooms?



*Figure 4 Teachers' opinions about the most appropriate type of humor in EFL classrooms*

The figure above illustrates that (76%) i.e. 13 participants out of 17 believe that the Affiliative sense of humor is mostly appropriate in EFL classrooms according to the context. Whereas, only 4 (24%) believe self-enhancing has a beneficial impact on students in EFL classrooms based on their experience.

**Question23.** When do you prefer to use humorous pauses in your classroom?

*Table 23*

*Teachers' preferable time to use humorous pauses in the classroom*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
At the beginning of the session	2	12%
During the session	15	88%
At the end of the session	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

Apparently, from table23, 15 teachers out of 17 prefer to use the humorous pauses during the session (88%). Contrary to that, (12%) choose to use them at the beginning of the session as an opening and warm ups. The participants stated the following justifications to support their choices:

**a) Teachers' justifications for "at the beginning of the session"**

- "To grab their attention and bring some positive energy to the classroom".
- "I usually open up with a joke to get students attention".

**b) Teachers' justifications for "during the session"**

- "The beginning is a destruction, the end they won't be listening, middle gets more attention".
- During the session is much better because: "students may lose some motivation and concentration. They may also get lost, tired or confused because of the lesson's difficulty".

**Question24.** How much time do your humorous breaks take throughout your session?

*Table 24*

*The duration of teachers' humorous pauses*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
1 minute to 5 minutes	12	70%



5 minutes to 10 minutes	4	24%
10 minutes to 15 minutes	1	6%
More than 15 minutes	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

It is critical for teachers to be aware of managing their time while using humorous pauses in the classroom in order not to waste and deviate from the core subject. Table 24 states that (70%) of participants do not exceed five minutes of time while using humorous pauses, which is considered academically appropriate. Other participants (24%) take pauses of 10 minutes, and (6%) take from 10 to 15 minutes pauses.

**Question 25.** According to you, the use of jokes, anecdotes, funny stories, funny comments, and memes breaks students' boredom.

*Table 25*

*Teachers' degree of agreement and disagreement about breaking students' boredom by using humorous materials*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	8	47%
Agree	8	47%
Neutral	1	6%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

As noticed, there is an equal percentage concerning teachers' agreement about the use of different forms of humor in breaking students' boredom. All in all teachers have a positive

attitude toward the statement; however, there was a neutral voice in the data. The participants justified their answers as follows:

**a) Teachers' justifications for "Strongly agree"**

- "Cracking a universal joke that is understood by the great majority can always save the day and create some sort of rapport. Indeed they break boredom and the routine of the traditional way of teaching".
- "Humor is a fundamental element while teaching that pedagogy ignores. Students appreciate fun classes and the same with effective and funny teacher".

**b) Teachers' justifications for "Agree"**

- "Having long periods of explanation distracts students' attention and decreases their concentration and motivation".
- "Humor is effective in helping students engage with complex and heavy subjects/topics".

**c) Teachers' justifications for "Neutral"**

- "Simply because not everyone can consider my jokes/ anecdotes as funny or amusing".

**Question26.** How do you perceive the idea of using jokes, anecdotes, funny stories, memes and funny comments in your class?

In this open question, participants stated their perceptions concerning the incorporation of forms of humor in their classes. Their responses were well-developed and positive. They are summarized as follows:

- Very open minded to anything- polite-
- Great and part of my personality.
- Very appreciated by my students and it is one of my strategies to get them involved in the class.
- Very successful indeed.

- I highly recommend it.
- I'm in favor of using humor to engage students. It creates more bridges between teachers and students.

## **Section Four: Further Suggestions**

### **Question27.** Teachers' comments and suggestions

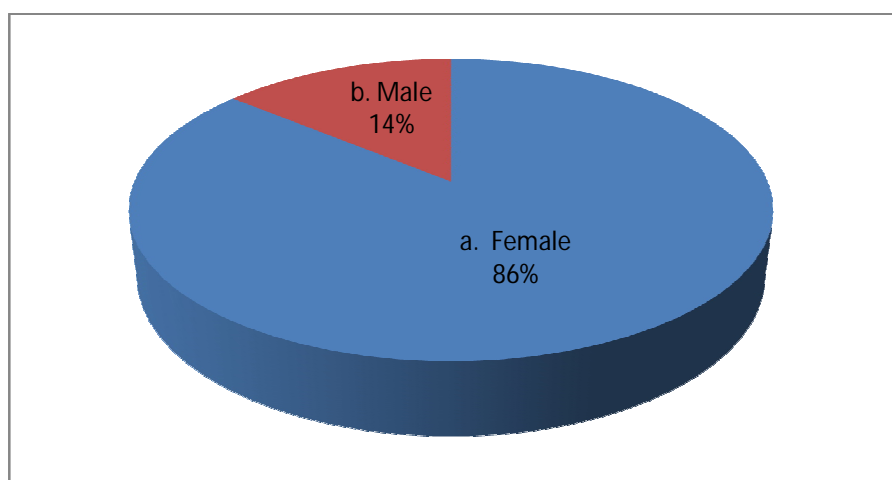
This question aims at receiving teachers' feedback and suggestions toward the application of humorous pauses in EFL classrooms. In this section, teachers' feedback varied and they mostly expressed their appreciation about the work and its perspective. One of the participants' comments argues that it is very difficult to use sense of humor in class if the teacher is not naturally endowed with it. On the other hand, he/she believes that artificial jokes and faked pauses are not appreciated by students. Another participant asserts that good humor is very useful to learn anything new either a language or any other subject.

Additionally, an impressive further scope of research in humor studies was suggested by one of the participants. He/she literally states that: "The use of humour in EFL education in an interesting scope of research and I would be keen to explore some classroom-based studies on the use of humour in Algerian EFL contexts".

### **3.2.3. Students' Questionnaire**

#### **Section One: General Information**

**Question1.** Would you specify your gender, please?



*Figure 5 Students' gender distribution*

The figure above represents participants' gender distribution. It is noticed that females' participation exceeded males' one by (86%). In total, there were 52 students who voluntarily took part in this study by answering the questionnaire; 45 females and 7 males.

**Question2.** Would you specify your age, please?

*Table 26*

*Students' age distribution*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	42	81%
25-35	9	17%
Above 35	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

It is noticed from table 24 that the vast majority of perspectives come from a young-age category (18-25) from different levels (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Master 1 &2 LMD), and from both English branches that exist at Biskra University (Science of Language & Literature and Civilization).

**Question3.** How can you describe your journey as an EFL student at university?

This open question was directed to students in order to have closer look over their experience as EFL students. Participants' responses varied between positive and negative. The table below clearly classifies their responses:

*Table 27*

*Students' responses concerning their journey as EFL students at university*

Students' positive responses	Students' negative responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's worth all the efforts</li> <li>• Great so far</li> <li>• Enthusiastic</li> <li>• Fruitful</li> <li>• perfect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard.</li> <li>• Quite confusing.</li> <li>• It was hard and needed a lot of work.</li> <li>• Full of challenges.</li> <li>• Tiring.</li> <li>• Boring.</li> </ul>

Other participants preferred to express their journey as follows:

- "I would say my university journey was unique where so far, I worked on refining my academic and critical skills pertaining to English language".
- "As an EFL student I was trying to improve my language as much as possible, my journey was full of fun learning English in/outside the classroom (with my friends)".

## **Section Two: Students' Perceptions of Students' Engagement in EFL Classroom**

**Question4.** Do you skip your classes from time to time?

*Table 28*

*Students' responses about whether they skip their classes or not*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	73%
No	14	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table carries a critical percentage (73%) concerning the participants' behavior of skipping classes. The answer "yes" was frequently repeated 38 times, whereas option "no" was selected by 14 students. This reveals that there exist some sorts of problems that lead students to skip their classes. Participants, in the case of choosing option "yes", were provided with several causes to indicate the most relevant one according to them.

*Table 29*

*Causes that make students skip their classes*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Your personal issues.	6	12%
Inadequate atmosphere or environment for learning (e.g. amphitheaters that lack speakers).	0	0%
Teacher's passive, de-motivating and/or disengaging way of teaching and dealing with students (i.e., Teacher's personality, character).	22	41%
Teacher's use of traditional and outdated teaching methods, strategies and techniques.	5	10%
The subject (module) and the heavy curriculum which repeatedly provides similar information to students.	5	10%
Inappropriate timing of sessions.	9	17%
Many gaps between sessions.	5	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

It is observed from the table above that participants do not attend their classes because of the teacher's passive way of teaching as well as dealing with students in the first place. It appears that their attendance, engagement and motivation heavily depend on the instructor per se by (41%).

In addition, the researcher gave a free-spoken space for students to state other causes. They added that the first and foremost reason for skipping classes is boredom. Furthermore, the teacher personality and his old fashioned teaching methods and strategies lead, to a certain extent, to class skipping.

**Question5.** How often do you feel engaged while being in the classroom?

*Table 30*

*Frequency of students' engagement while being in the classroom*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Always	18	35%
Sometimes	26	50%
Rarely	8	15%
Never	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

Apparently the majority of students (50%) do not always feel engaged while being in the classroom, and some of them (15%) are rarely engaged. In these cases, participants had to state briefly for what reason.

**Sub-question5.** In case of sometimes rarely or never, indicate briefly for what reason(s).

Students presented several reasons explaining their responses. To put in order their contribution, starting with the teacher per se; they put emphasis on the teacher's body language, voice, tone, seriousness, and his/her way of explaining as well as treating the content. Next, the content material (lessons); students described lessons as boring, over-repeated, and uninteresting which caused them to feel demotivated. These reasons affect their psychological state; such as boredom, inattention, and consequently lead them to disengagement. Other participants simply stated that it is due to lack of opportunity to be engaged.

**Question6.** Do you think that students' disengagement is due to:

*Table 31*

*Students' views about the reasons behind their disengagement*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Nonstop hours of explanation	4	8%
Heavy subjects (sophisticated concepts and notions)	3	6%
Inappropriate timing (mornings/ afternoons)	4	8%
Teachers' passive way of delivering information	11	21%
Teaching strategies and techniques	14	27%
All of them	0	0%
More than one choice	16	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

This question was directed to students targeting specific causes that lead to students' disengagement. As noticed in the table above, (30%) of participants chose more than one option; however, an important percentage (27%) state that teaching strategies and techniques adopted by teachers heavily affect and disengage students. Furthermore, some of the students



pointed to an important missing aspect which is teacher-student rapport. i.e., teachers should befriend students and use some sort of humor to lighten the classroom atmosphere.

**Question7.** How would you define “students’ engagement”?

This open question’s main purpose was to see how students define the concept of “students’ engagement” from their own perception using their own words. After analyzing participations’ definitions of the term students’ engagement, it was noticed that participants believe this term strongly involves the participation, the involvement, as well as the interaction of students with the classroom members. Additionally, other participants relate that students’ engagement occurs once students fully understand the lecture, discuss different concepts and notions, and contribute by introducing new information to the class. Whereas another significant number of participants simply stated that to be engaged in the classroom is to express thoughts and ideas freely, to be interested and curious about the subject matter.

One of the participants defined students’ engagement as: “It is when the student is actively participating in the diverse classroom activities. In contrast to passive learning, students' engagement revolves around the student's actions and mental/physical presence”.

**Question8.** To what extent do you think students’ engagement is important in teaching at the university level?

*Table 32*

*The degree of importance of students’ engagement in teaching at university level*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Very important	34	65%
Considerably important	10	20%
Important	8	15%
Slightly important	0	0%

Not important	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the statistics displayed in table32, all participants agree upon the importance of engagement of students at university level; however, the degree of its importance varies. It is noticed that (65%) of participants view the latter as very important even in advanced levels.

**Question9.** Are you satisfied with the way English is being taught?

*Table 33*

*Students' satisfaction with the way English is being taught*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	2%
No	51	98%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

It is clear from the table that (98%) of the participants, which is a high percentage, are unsatisfied with the way English language is being taught. This question is critical to be asked to students in particular in order to further investigate the reason (s) behind such a response. The researcher provided participants with common causes that explain their dissatisfaction with the way English language is being taught.

**Sub-question9.** If no, is it because of:

*Table 34*

*Reasons behind students' dissatisfaction with the way English is being taught*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
The old-fashioned teaching methods and strategies adopted by teacher (s)	23	44%

The lack of authentic materials and exposure to real-life situations where English can be practiced	19	37%
The teacher's strict and rigid personality. i.e., no room for fun that lightens up the boring teaching process.	10	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

Apparently, the first and foremost reason behind students' unsatisfactory with how English is being taught is the outdated teaching methods and techniques adopted by teachers. In addition to the lack of authentic materials in the classroom that allow students to better receive the language. On the other hand, other participants (19%) believe that language must be taught in a non-threatening, entertaining environment and the teacher's personality is a major cause. One of the participants added another reason which is the curriculum per se i.e., delivering nonsense and unnecessary elements to students.

**Question10.** In your opinion, why do some teachers fail to engage their students in the classroom?

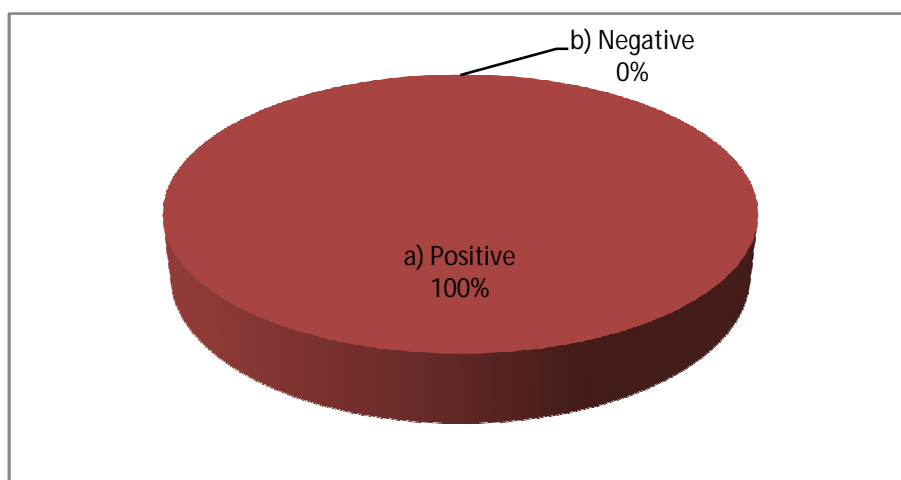
In this question, participants were allowed to give their opinions freely. Their responses varied so that the researcher categorized them into two (2) main categories:

**Category 1:** students of this category strongly argued that teachers themselves lack a sense of creativity and improvisation, they also believe that teachers' ultimate goal in the process of teaching and learning is to finish the curriculum regardless of whether students are fully integrated in the process or not. In addition to the previous, participants clearly stated that they lack the opportunity to participate, discuss, or exchange ideas especially in lectures; in other words, they are unable to activate their mental abilities such as critical thinking and draw significant conclusions by themselves due to the fact being receptive rather than productive.

**Category 2:** a significant number of participants assumed that teachers fail to engage their students mainly due to their lack of training as well as to their limited knowledge about psycho-pedagogy and its criticality. They believe that teachers must dedicate additional attention and effort to understand the psychological mindset of their students, because to students, there should be some sort of equilibrium in importance and correlation between students' psychological state and their learning process. Furthermore, participants of this category conceive that teachers use old-fashioned teaching methods which do not grab students' attention and do not go along with their generation (age). They also added that such outdated methods disharmonize with their needs, wishes, and learning styles.

However, only one of the 52 participants has a different perspective toward this matter. According to this participant, students are the first responsible for their learning, and therefore for their engagement in the classroom.

**Question11.** How do you view the idea of using humorous pauses to enhance students' engagement?



*Figure 6 Students' views about using humorous pauses to enhance students' engagement*

This constructed question directly explores the answer to one of this study's major questions. Apparently all participants agree upon the strong correlation between humorous pauses and students' engagement, they view the use of this strategy as (100%) positive in enhancing the engagement of students. Through the process of elaborating their responses, students pointed to the importance of being carefully aware about the appropriate and inappropriate use of humor because it is a double-edged sword. Participants believe that humor is a positive set and humorous pauses would be 100% workable if used appropriately. One of the participants stated the following:

Scientifically, the human's brain can only focus for a relatively short amount of time. Accordingly, the addition of humorous pauses is a way to refresh the brain; as well it 'lightens' the classroom atmosphere, as it cuts through the serious, 'too academic' feel. The latter is known to be very stressful and boring for the majority of students.

Another participant provided one of their teachers as a vivid example. They stated: "I have an example, Mr. B. That module was likable to everyone not because of the content but because of the teacher. Because he was using humorous pauses and we were 100% enjoyed and engaged".

### **Section Three: Students' Views Concerning the Use of Humor and Humorous Pauses in EFL Classrooms**

**Question12.** Do you consider yourself a funny person?

*Table 35*

*Students' awareness regarding the funny side of their personality*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	29	56%
No	1	2%

I do not know	22	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

This question is raised as an opening question for section three. The responses in the table above reflect students' awareness of being funny in nature or not. (56%) of the participants assume the fact they are funny individuals; on the other hand, a quite close percentage (42%) of students are unconscious regarding whether they cause laughter and amusement or not. This question was dedicated to assimilate students' personality with relevance to humor and fun; because to certain extent, funny individuals can perceive funny materials.

**Question13.** What is your definition of the term "Humor"?

Participants referred to humor through different ways of expressions. They believe it is the state of being open-minded toward whatever situation and react smoothly to it. They also defined the latter as the ability to produce and comprehend funny jokes or comments without offending not hurting other individuals' feelings. Additionally, they assumed, humor is the capacity to spread positivity around and among audience. All in all, it is a type of intelligence.

**Question14.** To what extent do you think humor is important in teaching?

*Table 36*

*The degree of importance of humor in teaching*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Very important	15	29%
Considerably important	18	35%
Important	18	35%
Slightly important	1	2%

Not important	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

Participants were asked to provide their personal opinion regarding humor in teaching particularly. In general, they agreed upon its importance in teaching; however, the degree of importance varied. Apparently they believe it is considerably important to be used but not overused, which its over-use may lead to negative consequences.

**Question15.** Have you ever been taught by teachers who use humor?

*Table 37*

*Students' responses concerning whether they have ever been taught by teachers who use humor or not*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	48	92%
No	1	2%
I do not remember	3	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

Seemingly students responded to this study appropriately based on their experience of being taught by teachers who utilize humor. It is noticed from the table that (92%) of them have been taught through the use of humor, that is to say they benefited from such experience.

**Question16.** How many of your teachers use humor in your classroom?

*Table 38*

*The number of teachers who use humor in classroom*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
All of them	0	0%

Most of them	8	15%
Few of them	44	85%
None of them	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to students' responses, teachers do not use humor frequently. (85%) of participants stated that only few of teachers use it in their classroom. This means to say, majority of teachers whether they avoid its use in teaching on purpose, they are unable to produce it appropriately or simply they lack sense of humor.

**Question17.** Which form(s) of humor do your teachers use the most? You can tick more than one answer.

*Table 39*

*Form(s) of humor teachers use the most*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Jokes	0	0%
Anecdotes	1	2%
Funny comments	1	2%
Funny stories	1	2%
Memes	1	2%
Puns	0	0%
Riddles	1	2%
All of them	2	4%
More than one answer	45	86%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>



It is noticed that these few teachers vary in the use of humor while teaching. In fact, varying the forms of humor may engage students more and break the teaching/learning routine and boredom in the classroom.

**Question18.** How do you perceive your teacher's(s) use of humor in class? You are allowed to choose more than one option.

*Table 40*

*Students' perceptions about their teachers' use of humor in class*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Appropriate to the educational setting (positive, friendly, peaceful humor)	4	8%
Inappropriate to the educational setting (negative, offensive, aggressive)	1	2%
Content-related humor (e.g. jokes are linked to the subject being taught)	9	17%
Non content-related humor (e.g. jokes have no relation with the subject being taught)	1	2%
All of them	1	2%
More than one answer	36	69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

Participants have chosen more than one option as the table displays. However it is observed that a significant number of students report that humor is used appropriately and serves the content to a certain degree.

**Question19.** Does your teacher's use of humor affect your:

*Table 41*

*The aspects affected by teachers' use of humor*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Learning process (e.g.: facilitates the learning tasks and makes complex concepts more comprehensive)	2	4%
Psychological state in classroom (e.g.: it relaxes you, enhances your engagement and decreases your anxiety, boredom and shyness)	18	35%
Both of them	32	61%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

This question is one of the fundamental questions in this questionnaire. It was raised to explore which aspect is heavily affected by teachers' use of humor. (61%) of the participants believe that both; the learning process and the psychological mindset of the students are affected by teachers' use of humor. Whereas, an interesting amount of students (35%) view that the latter heavily affects students' psychological state in the classroom.

**Question20.** Where do you think the use of humor is mostly needed?

*Table 42*

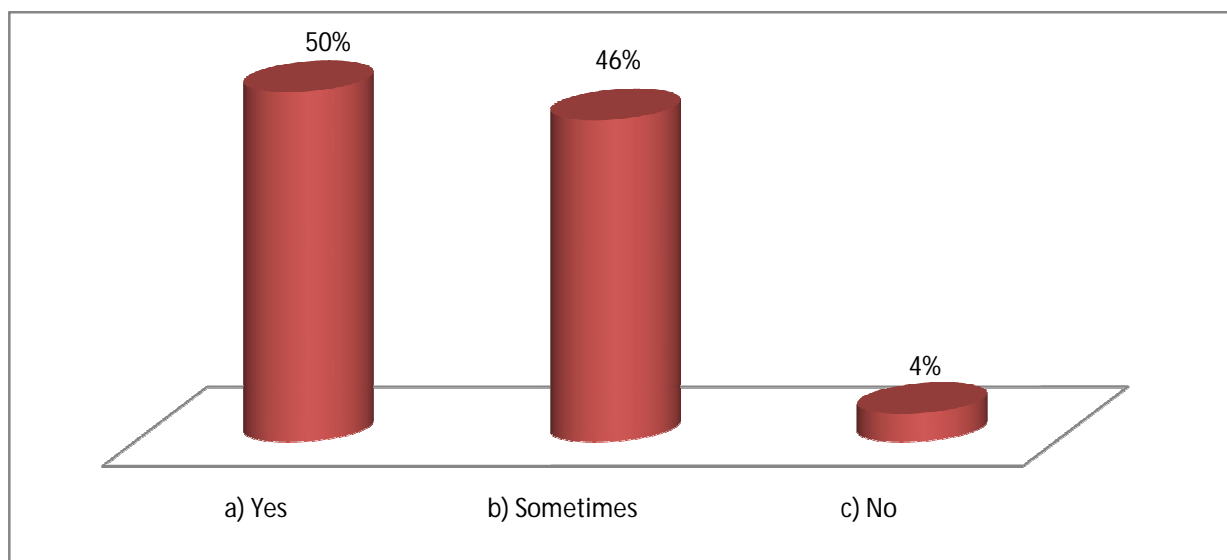
*The sessions where the use of humor is most needed*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Tutorial Sessions (TDs)	21	40%
Lectures	31	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

This question was developed to explore students' opinions concerning the sessions that require the use of more humor. Apparently humor is needed in both sessions (lectures & Tutorial Sessions); however, (60%) of participants strongly argue that it is crucial to be used in lectures more. For instance, participants justified their responses as follows:

- **For ‘Tutorial sessions (TDs)’:** “In TDs, the teacher is able to evaluate their students’ progression and reactions towards adopting such a strategy”.
- **For ‘Lectures’:** “In Tutorial sessions, we already have a lot of activities to do. Group work, presentations, discussions... But in a lecture, we have nothing to do but taking notes. So, we need humour in courses more”.

**Question21.** Do you understand all of your teachers' and/or peers' jokes, jocular comments and remarks?



*Figure 7 students' understanding of their teachers and/or peers' jokes, jocular comments and remarks*

It is noticed from the figure above that half of the participants clearly understand humor produced by the classroom members. On the other hand, (46%) of participants do not always understand their teachers and peers' jokes and jocular comments, (4%) of students do not perceive the latter at all. Students' inability to 100% comprehend humorous materials is may be due to several aspects; hence the researcher provided multiple causes. Participants were provided with the following:

Table 43

*Reasons behind students' inability to understand their teachers' and/or peers' jokes, jocular comments and remarks*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Your lack of humor competence (e.g.: when jokes are culture-related)	6	21%
The way of transmitting and cracking jokes	9	31%
The age gap between teacher and students	11	38%
The background, ethnicity and/or region	3	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>

Seemingly the age factor heavily influences the production and understanding of humor, in which teachers use old jokes unrelated to students' generation that cause confusion in students' minds. In relation to that, students believe teachers' way of transmitting and cracking jokes is the main reason to take extra time to process their jokes. Surprisingly, (21%) of participants seem to lack humor competence, which this latter requires pragmatic and semantic competencies. As known, humor cannot be separated from culture and each language has its peculiar culture as well as humor.

**Question22.** Do you prefer the humorous pauses to be:

Table 44

*Students' preferable language of humor pauses*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
In your native language(NL)	11	21%
In the target language(TL)	41	79%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

This question reveals students' interests regarding the preferable language of the humorous pauses, because the language used heavily influences their attention, interest, and mood in the classroom. (21%) of the participants prefer humorous pauses to be in their native language (Arabic) simply, as they justified, because sometimes they are unable to perceive the point from the target language (English) humor due to the less knowledgeable they possess about its culture. While on the contrary, (79%) of the participants prefer these humorous pauses to be in the target language (English). They elaborated their responses by stating that they are aware of their native language and its use, they are more interested to go beyond the English language use and explore new vocabulary and to be more aware of the English sense of humor through such pauses.

**Question23.** To what extent can the use of humorous pauses be a successful technique in breaking students' boredom in EFL classrooms?

*Table 45*

*The degree of humorous pauses successfulness as a technique to break students' boredom in EFL classrooms*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Very successful	24	46%
Successful	28	54%
Not successful	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

This question was raised in order to explore students' opinions concerning the successfulness of humorous pauses as a technique to break students' boredom. In a holistic picture, participants believe the latter technique to certain degree is successful (54%). Whereas (46%) state that humorous pauses is a very successful technique. One of the

participants stated the following: "I am talking from experience. Teachers with humorous techniques are more successful in their way of teaching".

**Question24:** In your opinion:

*Table 46*

*Students' attitudes towards the use of humorous pauses*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Using humorous pauses is indispensable in EFL classrooms	2	4%
Humorous pauses negatively affect the seriousness of the teaching/learning process	0	0%
Humorous pauses foster healthy and positive environment for students' engagement	37	71%
Humorous pauses are mostly needed to break communication barriers between teacher-students and students-students	13	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

Apparently participants have positive attitudes toward the use of humorous pauses in EFL classrooms. They believe that humor is pivotal in teaching and learning and this technique is appropriate to foster students' engagement through creating a positive environment.

#### **Section Four: Students' Views about the Effect of Humorous Pauses on Their Engagement**

The following question seeks students' views regarding the effect of humorous pauses on the three types of engagement. It is crucial to explore such area in order for teachers to focus on more while teaching. This question is divided into three main parts to investigate this technique's influence on (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagements). In each sub-

question of question 25, participants were provided with three statements to tick by “yes” or “no”.

### Question25.1 Humorous pauses and behavioral engagement

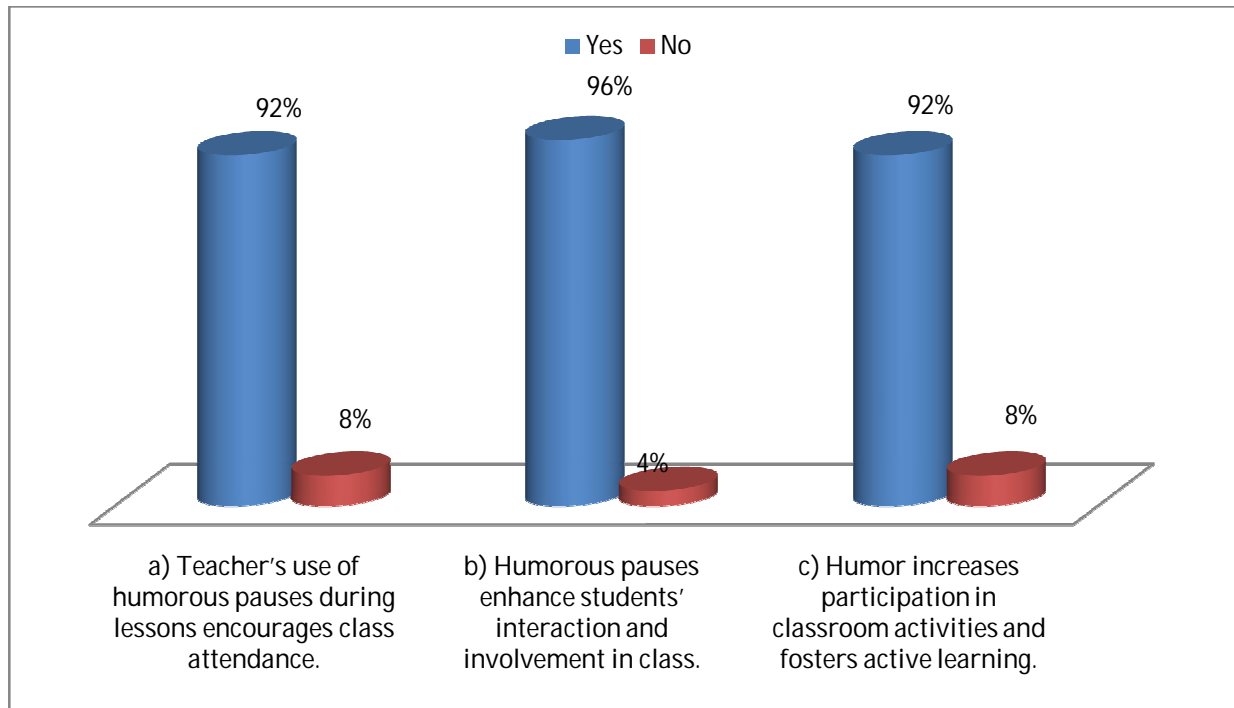


Figure 8.25.1 Humorous pauses and behavioral engagement

### Question25.2 Humorous Pauses and Emotional Engagement

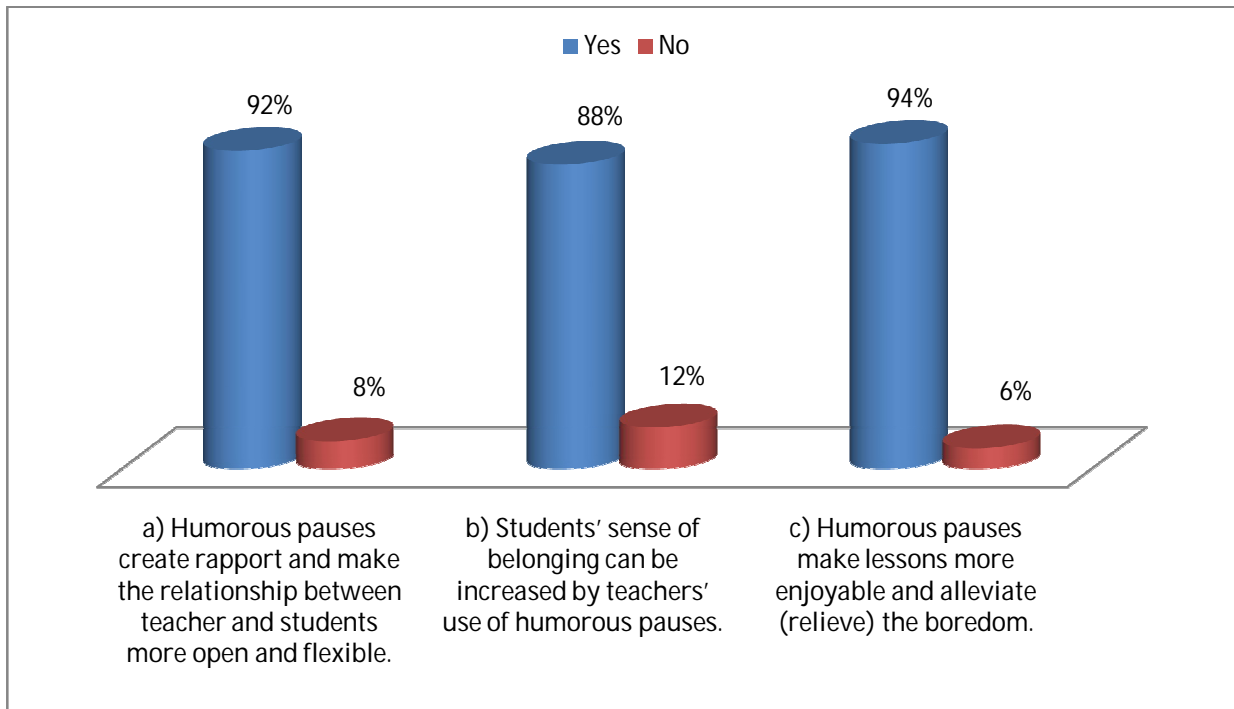


Figure 9.25.2 Humorous pauses and emotional engagement

**Question 25.3** Humorous Pauses and Cognitive Engagement

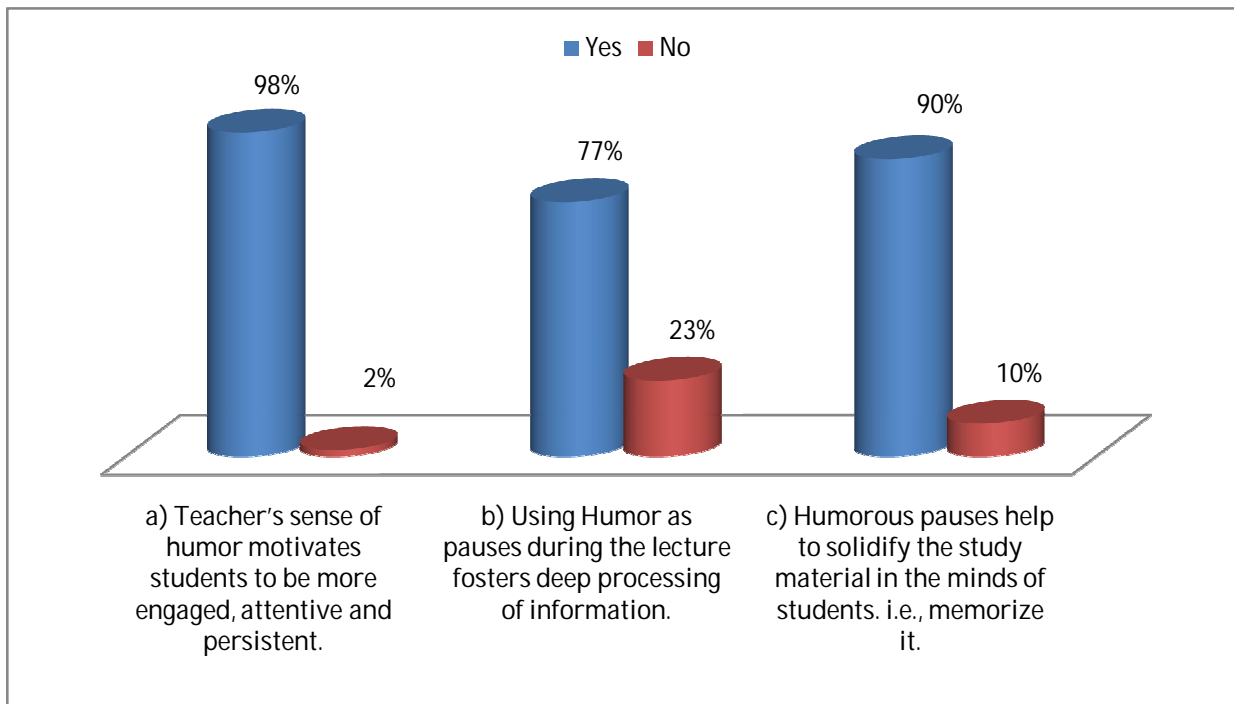


Figure 10.25.3 Humorous pauses and cognitive engagement



The three figures above represent a clear correlation between humorous pauses and students' engagement. Humorous pauses have significant effects on students' attendance, participation, involvement, and interaction (behavioral engagement). Additionally, they heavily impact students' affective side (emotional engagement). i.e., they create rapport between teacher and students, increase sense of socialization, and alleviate boredom in the classroom. Last but not least, this technique also facilitates students' memorization, retention, and recall of information (cognitive engagement).

**Question26.** According to you, the use of humorous pauses affects mostly your:

*Table 47*

*The type of students' engagement that is most affected by the use of humorous pauses*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Behavioral engagement	10	19%
Emotional engagement	24	46%
Cognitive engagement	18	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

This ultimate question straightforwardly answers one of our research questions. It is raised to specifically explore the type of engagement that is mostly affected in students by the use of humorous pauses. It is noticed from the table that participants believe this strategy influences all types of engagements due to their interrelationship; however, they put emphasis on students' emotional engagement (46%). Participants provided statements justifying their responses, for example:

**a) For 'Behavioral engagement'**

- "A humorous pause would really affect neither my emotions nor my comprehension, it'll just motivate me to participate and ask questions".

**b) For 'Emotional engagement'**

- “When you are in a good mood you tend to focus more in class and have a good relationship with the teacher”.

**c) For ‘Cognitive engagement’**

- “I tend to remember better when associating an information with a joke or a pun”.

**Question27.** Students’ comments and further suggestions

This part was devoted to students to react and provide their comments and suggestions regarding this research area. The following are some of their supportive comments:

- “It was so satisfying to answer this questionnaire; this topic is great. We hope it can affect the educational system in the future by taking in consideration the side that you focused on. Best of luck and wishes”.
- “I believe teachers should use humor to get to know their students; it'll help the students to be comfortable in asking questions and to simply participate”.
- “I have answered many, MANY questionnaires, yet this one is more or less unique, and special. (Most of the others are insanely repetitive). Best of luck!”
- “The longest questionnaire I answered, yet it is very rich of interesting questions, very good research and very well-done questionnaire, Good luck”.
- “Good luck, I’ve answered my fair share of questionnaires this year but I can say I enjoyed yours the most”.

It is noticed from students’ comments that in general, humor is important in education and humorous pauses in particular are pivotal for their engagement and motivation to learn. Additional remark, students found this questionnaire lengthy, yet they very much appreciated it as well as enjoyed it and did not feel bored responding to its questions.

### 3.3. Discussion and Synthesis of the Results

The aim of the present study was to explore the effectiveness of integrating humorous pauses (HP) as a pedagogical technique from teachers and students' perspectives to enhance EFL students' engagement. Moreover, it is deliberated to draw teachers' attention toward the efficient use of the latter technique to create sense of belonging and socialization among students as well as to strengthen the friendly relationship bond between students and their teachers. Accordingly, this study aimed at raising students' awareness, once they become future teachers, regarding the importance of adopting updated teaching techniques with the integration of humor in order to blend teaching/learning with enjoyment.

Veritably, this section of the study emphasized more on the effectiveness of humorous pauses' use as students' engaging technique in the EFL contexts at Biskra University and discusses the main themes emerged in the findings of both (teachers & students) questionnaires. Afterwards, research questions and hypotheses will be clearly stated. A volunteer sample of 17 teachers and 52 students were administered by questionnaires to contribute with their views and opinions concerning the effectiveness of implementing humorous pauses (breaks) in the classroom in order to enhance engagement and motivation, to increase socialization as well as rapport and decrease anxiety, boredom and shyness.

Initially, the first question of the present study was:

**Q1.** How do EFL teachers and students at Biskra University view the idea of using humorous pauses to enhance students' engagement?

**H1.** If EFL teachers and students have a positive attitude(s) toward the use of humorous pauses and apply it, students' engagement will be enhanced.

In fact, the in-depth analysis of the questionnaires revealed exceedingly positive and pleasant results toward the idea of adopting the said engaging technique. The results of the current study are, to certain degree, similar to previous works regarding the use of humor in classrooms (Deiter, 2000; Garner, 2006; Mantooth, 2010; Streat, 2011; Pham; 2014; Henderson, 2015; Ocon, 2015; Steele, 2017; Bakar, 2018; Fata et. al, 2018). Findings of the present work displayed that teachers and students very much appreciate the use of humor in teaching. Furthermore, it appeared that a teacher's personality and sense of humor, whether positive or negative, heavily impact students' behaviors such as: classroom attendance and participation that can consequently lead to positive academic achievements. Additionally, students and teachers welcomed the integration of humorous pauses during the sessions, in which it helps them both to relax from the overloaded and heavy content being presented and to trigger students' attention. In nutshell, our first research hypothesis was approved according to the findings,

**Q2.** To what extent can humorous pauses be a successful strategy in breaking students' boredom in EFL classes?

**H2.** Humorous pauses can be a successful strategy that breaks students' boredom in EFL classes.

Throughout the analysis, the sample of students emphasized upon the boring, outdated, and disengaging teaching methods and techniques that teachers adopt. As a result, they accepted our proposed technique as an alternative solution to energize and to refresh them. The results of the study displayed pleasant attitudes regarding humorous pauses and to great extent it was successful in breaking students' boredom in EFL classes. Therefore, our second hypothesis was confirmed.

**Q3.** What type of the three engagements can be mostly affected by humorous pauses in students?

**H3.** Emotional engagement is mostly affected by humorous pauses in students.

After analyzing the respondents' data and coming out with interesting findings, it was clear to address the fact that the named technique affects all types of engagement in students (behavioral, emotional, & cognitive). However, as it was predicted, humorous pauses heavily impact students' emotional engagement; that is to say, our last hypothesis of the present work was confirmed to be true.

The findings of the present work communicated positive attitudes and perceptions toward the use of the earlier mentioned technique and these results further uncovered outstanding themes and insights:

- Humorous pauses are considered as an opportunity for students to develop their humor competence of the target language: the study of whatever foreign language requires not only being linguistically competent, but also it requires the full knowledge of other competences such as pragmatics and semantics. Humor is a universal phenomenon and it is culturally tinted. Therefore, humor, culture, and language are regarded to be closely related and their study cannot be in isolation. In fact, humor varies across cultures, it breaks cultural boundaries and the fact being humorously competent can prevent cultural shocks. In addition to that, the sample of students remarked that they would learn new vocabularies through humorous pauses. Through the analysis, it appeared that they are eager to know more about the English humor.
- Humorous pauses challenge students' minds and intelligence: despite the countless types of humor, some of which students find attractive and funnier such like sarcasm and witticism. Humor and intelligent has a strong correlation, this fact was supported

initially by (Hauck & Thomas, 1972). Additionally, humor ability is related to mental processes such as problem-solving skills (Johnson, 1990) and it further promotes students' critical thinking. The findings of the present study were previously supported and revealed a high level of correlation between humor and other aspects that were mentioned earlier. Regardless of the fact of engagement and motivation, students strongly argued that humorous pauses involve them in the lecture in a creative manner.

- Humorous pauses are regarded as a tool for attention, retention and recall: the findings disclosed the efficiency of teaching with humor. i.e., if the information is presented in a humorous way, it tends to be engraved in the mind of the student and they would easily remember it. This theme was supported by the literature of previous studies (Mantooth, 2010). Furthermore, it is undeniable that humor utilization fosters students' active learning in which it urges them to participate. In addition, humorous pauses allow students to process and to evaluate the new knowledge, as well as to classify it to last longer in their long-term memory.

The results of the questionnaires revealed positive and significant attitudes and perceptions toward the importance of integrating humorous pauses during sessions and from students and teachers stand points, the use of the named technique must be carefully selected, appropriate to the educational setting, , and produced in the target language. i.e., English language.

To synthesize and as hypothesized earlier to the first main question of this study, teachers and students of Biskra University showed positive attitudes and perceptions regarding the use of humorous pauses as a technique that enhances students' engagement; that is to say, the hypothesis is accepted and supported. Furthermore, the following second research question sought to explore the extent to which this technique can be successful in breaking students' boredom, the researcher predicted that humorous pauses can be a successful technique that alleviates boredom in EFL classrooms. In fact, this prediction was strongly supported by the

findings. Proportionally to the final research question raised in this study that investigated the most affected type of engagement in students, it was forecasted by the researcher that students' emotional engagement is mostly influenced by the use of the proposed technique. This hypothesis was undeniably supported by the findings and accepted.

## **Conclusion**

The present chapter carries the field work of the study, in which it represents and argues the selected methodology in details. In addition, it attempts to describe the data gathering tool and the procedures that help in the accomplishment of this study. The researcher opted for thematic and content-based approaches in order to analyze the data that was gathered by the questionnaires. Furthermore, the same chapter provides discussion of the main findings and it points to outstanding and insightful themes.

## **General Conclusion**

The main objective of this study was to highlight the importance of using humorous pauses as a technique to enhance and foster EFL students' engagement. This work aimed at exploring the effectiveness and the feasibility of this technique in EFL classes from both teachers and students' perspectives. In addition, it intended to inquire into this technique's impacts on students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagements in particular.

In order to achieve the purpose of the present dissertation, the researcher opted for a qualitative research approach as a mode of inquiry because it tends to study individuals' perceptions, opinions, behaviors, and attitudes regarding certain phenomenon. Furthermore, it appeared that exploratory research design is most suitable in this case, in which we used only one research tool (Questionnaire). Questionnaire was the common data gathering tool to be used in such a period of time; it also facilitated the access of students through the internet. In

fact, it helped in collecting the maximum of opinions and views concerning the applicability of this named technique. The hypotheses, on the other hand, were proven right and the used data collection instrument helped in the validity and credibility of the present work.

According to the findings, this study has discovered that students are not satisfied with the way English language is being taught. Precisely, it has found that the teaching methods and techniques used by teachers are not effective pertaining to their engagement and motivation. Additionally, this study uncovered the truth that teachers disregard the criticality of selecting updated teaching techniques that tie this latter with students' age and generation. Furthermore, based on the findings, students in advanced levels accurately at university level, desire to challenge their minds, to think critically and creatively about concepts, and to draw their own conclusions.

Moreover, it was undeniable that students are heavily influenced by the teacher's personality and especially by his/her sense of humor. In matter of fact, students were eager to know how teachers poke jokes and produce them to create a humorized environment that facilitates learning. Besides, producing humor of the target culture using the target language appropriately is considered to be an extremely challenging task and students desire to experience such activity to further ameliorate their communicative competence.

Along with all what has been said, teachers and students have transmitted positive attitudes toward the importance of humor in general and regarding humorous pauses in particular. They perceive the latter as a successful technique that energizes, motivates, and re-engages them in the classroom and becomes more attentive and persistent. As the findings exhibit, humorous breaks trigger students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagements; however, they affect the affective part mostly.



## Recommendations and Further Suggestions

Based on the findings as well as on teachers' opinions and students' perceptions, needs, wishes and wants, we recommend the following:

- Teachers should integrate more humor in EFL classrooms and encourage its polite use by students in order to create a sense of socialization and rapport.
- Educators must break the continuous and boring sessions that go for more than one hour by inserting jokes, memes, funny stories and comments to hook students' attention.
- Teachers should use humorous pauses not just to alleviate classroom boredom, but also to enhance students' engagement and motivation.
- It is recommended to use humorous pauses during sessions to foster students' humor competence which is culturally, pragmatic, as well as semantic related competence and must be promoted in EFL students.
- The use of humorous pauses as a pedagogical technique leads to personalized learning (PL); in which students feel more involved and familiar with the teacher and to be encouraged to suggest what they prefer to learn and how they want to learn it.
- Educational policy-makers need to integrate humorous pauses as an engaging technique in pedagogy in early university stages. In addition to that, syllabus makers should add the study of humor competence to EFL syllabus to develop this particular skill in EFL students.
- Students must be exposed to the humor of the target language (English) more often in order to prevent cultural shocks in the future.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A : Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ)

#### Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ)

APR. 4, 2017

## Test Yourself: Psychologists Created a Quiz to Define Your Sense of Humor

By Roni Jacobson

### What's Your Sense of Humor?

1. I usually don't laugh or joke around much with other people.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree
2. If I am feeling depressed, I can usually cheer myself up with humor.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree
3. If someone makes a mistake, I will often tease them about it.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree
4. I let people laugh at me or make fun at my expense more than I should.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree
5. I don't have to work very hard at making other people laugh — I seem to be a naturally humorous person.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree
6. Even when I'm by myself, I'm often amused by the absurdities of life.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree

7. **People are never offended or hurt by my sense of humor.**



8. **I will often get carried away in putting myself down if it makes my family or friends laugh.**



9. **I rarely make other people laugh by telling funny stories about myself.**



10. **If I am feeling upset or unhappy I usually try to think of something funny about the situation to make myself feel better.**



11. **When telling jokes or saying funny things, I am usually not very concerned about how other people are taking it.**



12. **I often try to make people like or accept me more by saying something funny about my own weaknesses, blunders, or faults.**



13. I laugh and joke a lot with my friends.



14. My humorous outlook on life keeps me from getting overly upset or depressed about things.



15. I do not like it when people use humor as a way of criticizing or putting someone down.



16. I don't often say funny things to put myself down.



17. I usually don't like to tell jokes or amuse people.



18. If I'm by myself and I'm feeling unhappy, I make an effort to think of something funny to cheer myself up.



---

19. Sometimes I think of something that is so funny that I can't stop myself from saying it, even if it is not appropriate for the situation.



20. I often go overboard in putting myself down when I am making jokes or trying to be funny.



21. I enjoy making people laugh.



22. If I am feeling sad or upset, I usually lose my sense of humor.



23. I never participate in laughing at others even if all my friends are doing it.



24. When I am with friends or family, I often seem to be the one that other people make fun of or joke about.



---

25. I don't often joke around with my friends.



---

26. It is my experience that thinking about some amusing aspect of a situation is often a very effective way of coping with problems.



---

27. If I don't like someone, I often use humor or teasing to put them down.



---

28. If I am having problems or feeling unhappy, I often cover it up by joking around, so that even my closest friends don't know how I really feel.



---

29. I usually can't think of witty things to say when I'm with other people.



---

30. I don't need to be with other people to feel amused — I can usually find things to laugh about even when I'm by myself.





---

31. Even if something is really funny to me, I will not laugh or joke about it if someone will be offended.



---

32. Letting others laugh at me is my way of keeping my friends and family in good spirits.



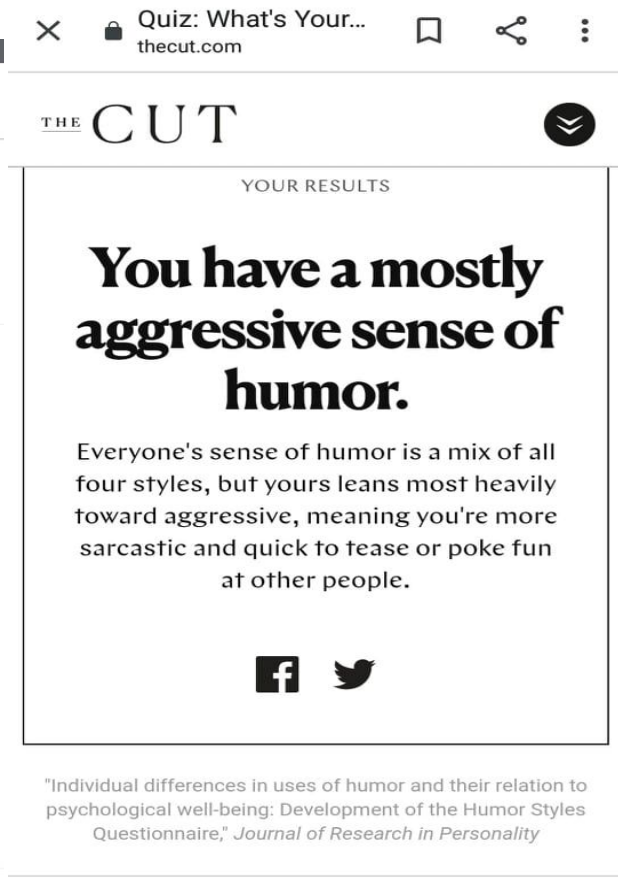
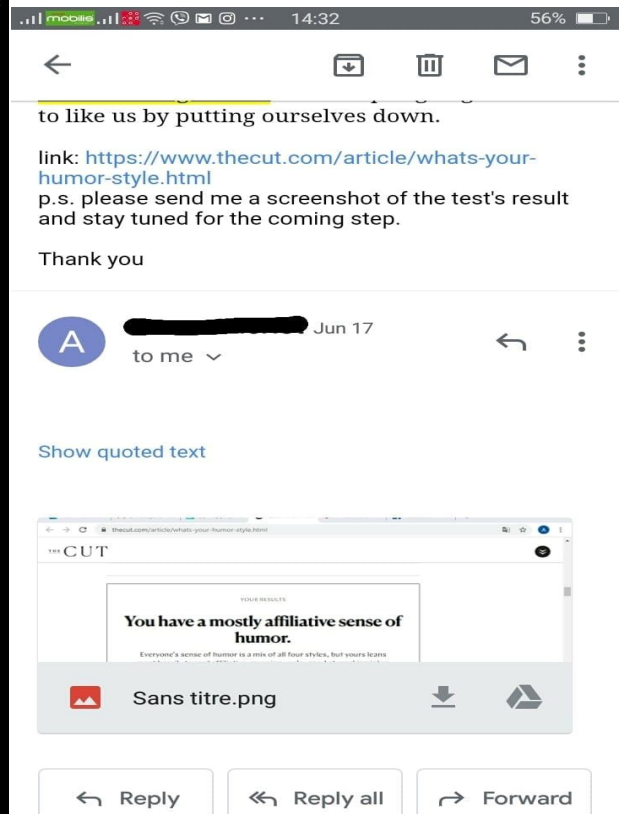
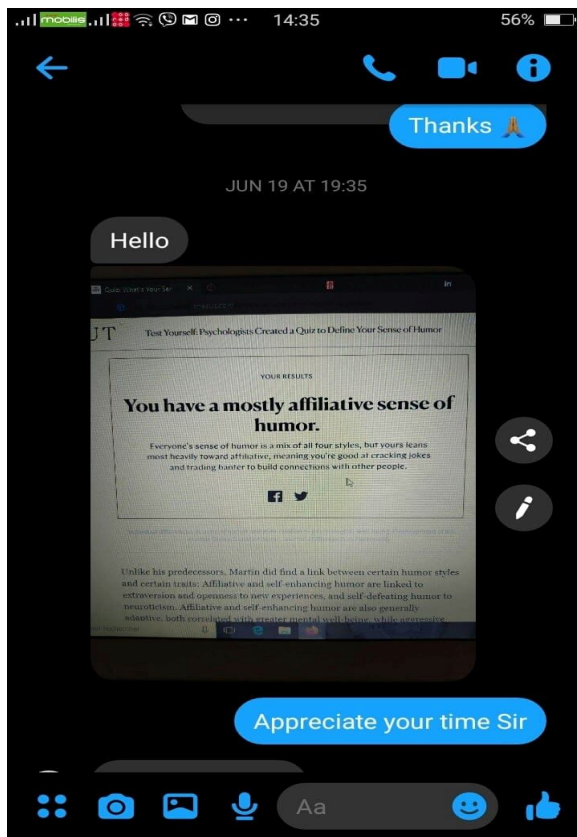
### SEE YOUR RESULTS

"Individual differences in uses of humor and their relation to psychological well-being: Development of the Humor Styles Questionnaire," *Journal of Research in Personality*

---

**Link:** <https://www.thecut.com/article/whats-your-humor-style.html>

## Appendix B: Samples of Teachers' HSQ's Results (Screenshots)



p.s. please send me a screenshot of the test's result and stay tuned for the coming step.

Thank you

[Redacted] Jun 3 to me

Good day,  
This is the result i got.  
Best of luck Sana.

Show quoted text



Sana Merghad Jun 4

self-creating humor is attempting to get others to like us by putting ourselves down.

link: <https://www.thecut.com/article/whats-your-humor-style.html>

p.s. please send me a screenshot of the test's result and stay tuned for the coming step.

Thank you

[Redacted] Jun 4 to me

Hello. I have done it. Here is the screenshot.  
Good luck

Show quoted text



to like us by putting ourselves down.

link: <https://www.thecut.com/article/whats-your-humor-style.html>

p.s. please send me a screenshot of the test's result and stay tuned for the coming step.

Thank you

[Redacted] Jun 9 to me

THESE ARE MY RESULTS COPIED  
YOUR RESULTS  
**You have a mostly affiliative sense of humor.**  
Everyone's sense of humor is a mix of all four styles, but yours leans most heavily toward affiliative, meaning you're good at cracking jokes and trading banter to build connections with other people.

Garantl sans virus. www.avg.com

Show quoted text

link: <https://www.thecut.com/article/whats-your-humor-style.html>

p.s. please send me a screenshot of the test's result and stay tuned for the coming step.

Thank you

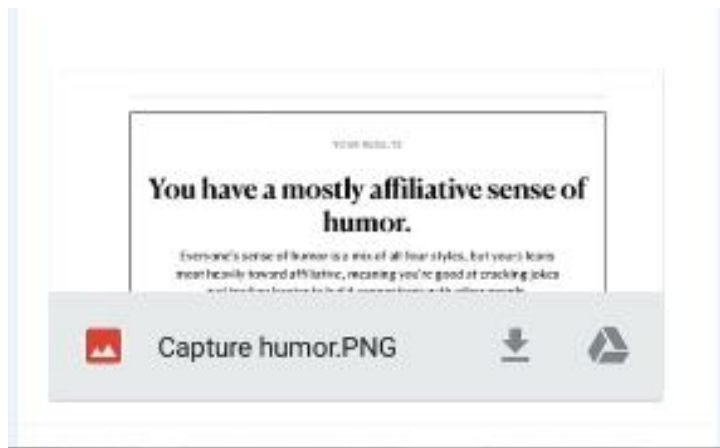
[Redacted] Jun 21 to me

Salam Sana,  
So sorry for the late reply. Please find attached the result of the test.

Show quoted text



Sana Merghad Jun 21



14:31 56% 14:33 56%

← [redacted] Jun 3 to me ▾ ↩ ⋮

Hello,  
Here you go... The result of the test.

THE CUT

## You have a mostly affiliative sense of humor.

Everyone's sense of humor is a mix of all four styles, but yours leans most heavily toward affiliative, meaning you're good at cracking jokes and trading banter to build connections with other people.



← [redacted] Jun 10 to me ▾ ↩ ⋮

1FAIpQLSfrRr6xtq5e2CD20Ss-fbUHqq6hJlh10-De888o1zFQrbR46Q/viewform

Show quoted text

Hi,  
this is my result.  
Good Luck

Show quoted text



Sana Merghad Jun 10 ↩ ⋮

**Appendix C: Questionnaire about Teachers' Perspectives toward Incorporating Humorous Pauses as a Technique to Enhance EFL Students' Engagement**

**A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EFL TEACHERS TOWARD INCORPORATING HUMOROUS PAUSES AS A TECHNIQUE TO ENHANCE EFL STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT**

**Science of the Language at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra**

Dear teachers,

You are kindly requested to fill the present questionnaire which serves as a data gathering tool in order to collect the information needed for the completion of our Master Degree. Your sincere responses will be the basis of our research entitled “**The Importance of Using Humorous Pauses as a Technique to Enhance EFL Students’ Engagement**”. The current study aims at exploring the significance of inserting short, humorous pauses (jokes, anecdotes, funny comments, memes...) to engage students physically as well as mentally in the classroom, to break boredom, and to create healthy teacher-students relationship. Your responses are highly appreciated in advance.

Thank you for your collaboration.

**Candidate:** SANA MERGHAD

**Contact info:** sanamerghad8@gmail.com

**Supervised by:** Slimane TEMAGOULT

**Definitions of key terms:**

**Affiliative humor:** means cracking jokes, engaging in banter, and otherwise using humor to make others like us.

**Aggressive humor:** is characterized by sarcasm, teasing, criticism, and ridicule.

**Self-enhancing humor:** is an optimistic, coping humor, characterized by the ability to laugh at yourself or at the absurdity of a situation and feel better as a result.

**Self-defeating humor:** is attempting to get others to like us by putting ourselves down.

**Memes:** are images, videos, pieces of texts, etc., typically humorous in nature that are copied and spread rapidly by internet users, often with slight variation.

**SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Instructions:**

Tick the answers that suit you best and elaborate your responses whenever necessary.

1) Specify your gender

a. Male

b. Female

2) Specify your qualification

a. Master (MA)

b. Magister

b. PhD

3) How long have you been teaching English as Foreign Language?

.....

4) How can you describe your experience as an EFL teacher at university?

.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION TWO: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS'**

**ENGAGEMENT IN EFL CLASSROOM**

Tick the appropriate response that suits you best.

1) How do you consider managing students' engagement at university level?

a. Crucial

b. Optional

c. Needless

Please justify:

.....  
.....

2) While teaching, do you believe that your students are:

a. Engaged

b. Somehow engaged

c. Disengaged

3) How often do your students skip your classes?

a. Always

b. Often

c. Sometimes

d. Rarely

e. Never

4) What are the main teaching strategies you use in order to foster students' engagement in the classroom?

.....  
.....  
.....

5) Do you think that students' disengagement is due to:

1. Nonstop hours of explanation

2. Heavy subjects (sophisticated concepts and notions)

3. Inappropriate timing (mornings/ afternoons)

4. Teachers' passive way of delivering information

5. Teaching strategies and techniques

Others: .....

6) According to you, do you believe that a teacher's personality affects students' behaviors in the classroom?

a. Yes

b. No

Please justify:

.....  
.....

**SECTION THREE: TEACHERS' VIEWS CONCERNING THE USE OF HUMOR AND HUMOROUS PAUSES IN EFL CLASSROOM**

Answer the following questions by: ticking, justifying and/or elaborating them.

1) Do you think that a teacher's sense of humor affects students' engagement?

a. Yes

b. No

If yes, what type (s) of engagement is mostly affected in students? You may choose more than one suggestion.

a. Behavioural engagement

b. Emotional engagement

c. Cognitive engagement

d. All of them

2) Do you use humor while teaching?

a. Yes

b. No

In both cases, justify:

.....  
.....  
.....



3) Which form(s) of humor do you use in your classroom?

**p.s. You can tick more than one answer.**

- a. Jokes
- b. Anecdotes
- c. Funny comments
- d. Funny stories
- e. Memes
- f. Puns
- g. Riddles

4) To what extent do you believe that using form(s) of humor could be successful in EFL classrooms?

- a. Very successful
- b. Successful
- c. unsuccessful

Your opinion please: .....

.....

.....

5) Select one statement you relate to:

- a. Using humorous pauses are indispensable in EFL classrooms
- b. Humorous pauses negatively affect the seriousness of the teaching/learning process
- c. Humorous pauses foster healthy and positive environment for students' engagement

d. Humorous pauses are mostly needed to break communication barriers between teacher-students and students-students

6) How do you use humorous pauses:

a. Intentionally (pre-prepared/ on purpose)

b. Spontaneously (naturally)

Justify your answer:

.....  
.....  
.....

7) Are your humorous pauses:

a. Content-related

b. Non content-related

8) Which of the following do you think students appreciate the most?

a. Content-related humorous pauses

b. Non content-related humorous pauses

9) How can you evaluate your students' reactions when you pause to say something funny?

a. Positive

b. Negative

10) How often do you tolerate students' use of humor in your classroom?

a. Always

b. Sometimes

c. Rarely

d. Never

Please, justify:

.....

**11)** After undertaking the Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ), what is your sense of humor according to the test?

.....

**12)** As an EFL teacher, which type of humor do you believe is most appropriate in EFL classrooms?

a. Affiliative

b. Aggressive

c. Self-enhancing

d. Self-defeating

Identify others:

.....

**13)** When do you prefer to use humorous pauses in your classroom?

a. At the beginning of the session

b. During the session

c. At the end of the session

Elaborate for what reason (s):

.....

.....

**14)** How much time do your humorous breaks take throughout your session?

a. 1 minute to 5 minutes

b. 5 minutes to 10 minutes

c. 10 minutes to 15 minutes

d. More than 15 minutes

15) According to you, does the use of jokes, anecdotes, funny stories, funny comments, and memes break students' boredom?

a. Strongly agree

b. Agree

c. Neutral

d. Disagree

e. Strongly disagree

Please, justify:

.....  
.....

16) How do you perceive the idea of using jokes, anecdotes, funny stories, and funny comments in your class?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION FOUR: FURTHER SUGGESTIONS**

1) Teachers are free to provide further suggestions and comments that may enrich this topic.

.....  
.....

.....

.....

**We appreciate your time.**

**Appendix D: Opinionnaire**

**Opinionnaire**

1. What was your first impression of the questionnaire?

- Too long
- Long
- Medium length
- Short
- Too short
- Boring
- Amusing

2. Any misspelled words, repetition, or grammatical mistakes?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please identify them:

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. After scanning the questionnaire, do you see any irrelevant question (s) that does not serve this study?

- Yes, there is
- No, there is not

If see any, kindly identify them:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Is the questionnaire addressed appropriately, in terms of the language, to professional level?

Appropriate

Somehow appropriate

Inappropriate

5. What is your opinion concerning the structure and the types of questions? Do you see any diversity, are they alike, no?

Please, identify:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. Lastly, feel free to criticize, advise, or point out any important remark.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Your precious time and efforts are highly appreciated.**

**Appendix E: A Questionnaire for EFL Students Concerning Incorporating Humorous Pauses as Technique to Enhance EFL Students' Engagement**

**A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EFL STUDENTS CONCERNING  
INCORPORATING HUMOROUS PAUSES AS TECHNIQUE TO  
ENHANCE STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT**

**Science of the Language at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra**

Dear students,

You are kindly requested to fill the present questionnaire which serves as a data gathering tool in order to collect the information needed for the completion of our Master Dissertation. Your sincere responses will be the basis of our research entitled **“Teachers and Students’ Perceptions toward Using Humorous Pauses as Technique to Enhance Students’ Engagement”**. The current study aims at exploring the significance of inserting short, humorous pauses (jokes, anecdotes, funny comments, memes...) to engage students physically as well as mentally in the classroom, to break boredom, and to create healthy teacher-students relationship. Your responses are highly appreciated in advance.

Thank you for your patience.

**Researcher:** SANA MERGHAD

**Contact info:** sanamerghad8@gmail.com

**Supervised by:** SLIMANE TEMAGOULT

Definitions of key terms:

**Memes:** are images, videos, pieces of texts, etc., typically humorous in nature that are copied and spread rapidly by internet users, often with slight variation (Cambridge Dictionary).

**Humor competence:** “is the capacity of recognizing and understanding humor. It is an important aspect of semantic and pragmatic competence for advanced language learners” (Hodson, 2014).

**Pun:** is an amusing use of a word or phrase that has several meanings or that sounds like another (Cambridge Dictionary).

**Riddle :** is a type of question that describes something in a difficult and confusing way and has a clever or funny answer, often asked as a game (Cambridge Dictionary).

**Authentic materials:** are any material (video, picture, letter, audio...) written or spoken in English which their content makes the teaching & learning processes even more engaging, imaginative and motivating (Zazulak, 2017).



## SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

### Instructions:

Tick the answers that suit you best and elaborate your responses whenever necessary.

5) Specify your gender

c. Male

b. Female

6) Specify your age

a. 18-25

b. 25-35

c. Above 35

7) How can you describe your journey as an EFL student at university?

.....  
.....

## SECTION TWO: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS'

### ENGAGEMENT

#### Instructions

Choose what sounds accurate to you.

8) Do you skip your classes?

f. Yes

g. No

If yes, is it due to:

a. Your personal issues.

b. Inadequate atmosphere, environment for learning (e.g. amphitheaters that lack speakers).

c. Teacher's passive, de-motivating and disengaging way of dealing with students (i.e., Teacher's personality, character).

- d. Teacher's use of traditional and outdated teaching methods, strategies and techniques.
- e. The subject (module) and the heavy curriculum which repeatedly provides similar information to students.
- f. Inappropriate timing of sessions.
- g. Many gaps between sessions.

9) How often do you feel engaged while being in the classroom?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

For what reason (s):

.....  
 .....

10) How would you define "students' engagement"?

.....  
 .....

11) To what extent do you think students' engagement is important in teaching at university level?

- a. Very important
- b. Considerably important
- c. Important
- d. Slightly important
- e. Not important

12) Do you think that students' disengagement is due to:

- 6. Nonstop hours of explanation
- 7. Heavy subjects (sophisticated concepts and notions)
- 8. Inappropriate timing (mornings/ afternoons)
- 9. Teachers' passive way of delivering information
- 10. Teaching strategies and techniques

Others: .....

13) Are you satisfied with the way English is being taught?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If no, is it because of:

- a. The old-fashioned teaching methods and strategies adopted by teacher (s)
- b. The lack of authentic materials and exposure to real-life situation where English can be practiced
- c. The teacher's strict and rigid personality. i.e., no room for fun that lightens up the boring teaching process.

Others, specify: (optional)

.....  
.....

14) In your opinion, why do some teachers fail to engage their students in the classroom?

.....  
.....

15) How do you view the idea of using humorous pauses as technique to enhance students' engagement?

- a. Positive
- b. Negative

Elaborate:

.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION THREE: STUDENTS' VIEWS CONCERNING THE USE  
OF HUMOR IN EFL CLASSROOM**

16) Do you consider yourself a funny person?

- a. Yes

- b. No
- c. I don't know

17) What is your definition of the term "Humor"?

.....  
.....

18) To what extent do you think humor is important in teaching?

- a. Very important
- b. Considerably important
- c. Important
- d. Slightly important
- e. Not important

19) Have you ever been taught by teachers who use humor?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't remember

20) How many of your teachers use humor in class?

- a. All of them
- b. Most of them
- c. Few of them
- d. None of them

21) Which form(s) of humor do your teachers use the most?

**p.s. You can tick more than one answer.**

- h. Jokes
- i. Anecdotes
- j. Funny comments
- k. Funny stories
- l. Memes
- m. Puns
- n. Riddles

**22)** Do you understand all of your teacher's, or peers' jokes, jocular comments and remarks?

- a. Yes
- b. Sometimes
- c. No

If sometimes or no, is it due to: (multiple choices)

- a. Your lack of humor competence (e.g.: when jokes are culture-related)
- b. The way of transmitting and cracking jokes
- c. The age gap between teacher and students
- d. The background, ethnicity and/or region

Others: .....

**23)** How do you perceive your teacher's (s) use of humor in class?

- a. Appropriate to the educational setting ( positive, friendly, peaceful humor)
- b. Inappropriate to the educational setting (negative, offensive, aggressive)
- c. Content-related humor (e.g. jokes are linked to the subject being taught)
- d. Non content-related humor (e.g. jokes have no relation with the subject being taught)

**24)** Does your teacher's use of humor affect your: (Multiple choices).

- a. Learning process (e.g.: facilitates the learning tasks and makes it comprehensive)
- b. Psychological state in classroom (e.g.: it relaxes you, enhances your engagement and decreases your anxiety, boredom and shyness)
- c. Behavioral engagement
- d. Cognitive engagement
- e. Emotional engagement
- f. All the above
- g. None of the above

Others:

.....  
.....

25) Where do you think the use of humor is most needed?

- a. Tutorial sessions (TDs)
- b. Lectures

Justify:

.....  
.....

26) In your opinion:

- e. Using humorous pauses is indispensable in EFL classrooms
- f. Humorous pauses negatively affect the seriousness of the teaching/learning process
- g. Humorous pauses foster healthy and positive environment for students' engagement
- h. Humorous pauses are mostly needed to break communication barriers between teacher-students and students-students

27) Do you prefer humorous pauses to be:

- a. In your native language
- b. In the target language

Elaborate:

.....  
.....

28) To what extent can humorous pauses be a successful technique in breaking students' boredom in EFL classroom?

- a. Very successful
- b. Successful
- c. Not successful

Please justify:

.....  
.....

**SECTION FOUR: STUDENTS' VIEWS ABOUT THE EFFECT OF HUMOROUS PAUSES' ON ENGAGEMENTS**

29) Tick what suits you best.

<b>Humorous Pauses and Behavioral Engagement</b>			
<b>N</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1.	a. Teacher's use of humorous pauses during lessons encourages class attendance.		
2.	b. Humorous pauses enhance students' interaction and involvement in class.		
3.	c. Humor increases participation in classroom activities and fosters active learning.		

<b>Humorous Pauses and Emotional Engagement</b>			
<b>N</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1.	a. Humorous pauses create rapport and make the relationship between teacher and students more open and flexible.		
2.	b. Students' sense of belonging can be increased by teachers' use of humorous pauses.		
3.	c. Humorous pauses make lessons more enjoyable and alleviate (relieve) the boredom.		

<b>Humorous Pauses and Cognitive Engagement</b>			
<b>N</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1.	a. Teacher's sense of humor motivates students to be more engaged, attentive and persistent.		
2.	b. Using Humor as pauses during the lecture fosters deep processing of information.		

3.	c. Humorous pauses help to solidify the study material in the minds of students. i.e., memorize it.		
----	---	--	--

**30)** According to you: the use of humorous pauses affect mostly your: (one option)

- a. Behavioral engagement
- b. Emotional engagement
- c. Cognitive engagement

**Thanks for your time, effort and assistance.**



## المخلص

لطالما كانت مشاركة الطلاب في الصفوف محل اهتمام الكثير من علماء اللغة والباحثين، والتي تعتبر هاته الاخيرة أول خطوة لنجاح التعليم لهذا تعتبر تداخلات الطلبة في الصف مؤشر لفاعلية المكون و التحصيل العلمي للطلاب. وفي التعليم العالي بوجه الخصوص لا بد ان يكون هناك تميز بالحدائثة والحيوية والتحفيز وذلك بسبب المستوى المتقدم الذي يتطلب المهارات الكاملة؛ و يجب أيضا تحديث إستراتيجيات التدريس وتقنياته لتتماشى وتلبي معايير كل جيل لأن طلبة اليوم يميلون وبصفة كبيرة الى التعليم الأكاديمي الذي يكون بصفة اقل رسمية مع روح الدعابة؛ في الحقيقة، الفكاهاة مثال جيد لث النشاط والحيوية في نفسية الطلبة وكسر روتين الدراسة الممل وجذب انتباههم. في ظل ماسبق، تهدف هاته الدراسة في الأساس الى تسليط الضوء أهمية دمج وقفات مرحلة كأسلوب لتعزيز مشاركة الطلبة في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية، قمنا بطرح فرضيات تنص على أن هاته الأخيرة تعتبر تقنية إيجابية و ناجحة ولأجل إثبات صحة الفرضيات قمنا بوضع إستبيان للحصول على البيانات اللازمة من افراد العينة التي تنطبق عليها الدراسة، كذلك حاولنا جمع مختلف آراء و تصورات الأساتذة والطلبة وأيضا دراسة وتحليل وجهات نظرهم بشأن تبني هاته التقنية التي بدورها تعزز الجانب النفسي والحسي لدى الطلبة. و بعد تحليل عميق للآراء وسلوكيات الأساتذة والطلبة أظهرت النتائج سلوكيات إيجابية حول الفكاهاة عموما وحول تبني التقنية المسماة سابقا خصوصا. وأما بالأخير فقد تم إكتشاف أفكار ومواضيع من الممكن لها أن تزيد من رقي التعليم في جامعة محمد خيضر وبهذا تكون نتائج هاته الدراسة قد أثبتت الفرضيات وأجابت عن الأسئلة المطروحة.

## Resumen

El compromiso de los estudiantes siempre ha captado el interés de varios educadores y estudiosos del lenguaje. Efectivamente, la participación de los estudiantes desempeña un papel vital en el aula; es un indicador de la eficacia de los profesores y de los logros de los estudiantes. Por otra parte, la enseñanza, especialmente en la educación superior, debe ser moderna, vívida, divertida y motivadora a fin de que los estudiantes se comprometan con la conferencia o con el conocimiento que se presenta. Las estrategias y técnicas de enseñanza deben actualizarse para satisfacer los criterios de cada generación. Hoy día los estudiantes tienden más a la enseñanza y el aprendizaje informales; en los que el profesor crea una atmósfera amistosa para que los estudiantes aprendan, participen, rían, se sientan a gusto y actúen libremente. Además, el humor es un gran ejemplo que rompe el hielo entre el profesor y los estudiantes, rompe el aburrimiento y el aburrido proceso de enseñanza que a los estudiantes les disgusta. A la luz de lo anterior, el presente estudio tiene como objetivo principal explorar la importancia de integrar las pausas humorísticas como técnica para mejorar el compromiso de los estudiantes de EFL. Se formuló la hipótesis de que la aplicación de pausas humorísticas durante las clases podría ser una técnica eficaz y exitosa que mejorara el compromiso de los estudiantes y rompiera el aburrimiento en el aula. Con el fin de adoptar la técnica mencionada en las clases de EFL en la Universidad de Biskra, intentamos explorar las percepciones y puntos de vista de los profesores y los estudiantes con respecto a esta última. A través de un detallado análisis cualitativo de cuestionarios semi-estructurados proporcionados a los profesores y estudiantes de EFL que respondieron voluntariamente, la evidencia reportó actitudes positivas con respecto al uso de esta técnica y su efecto sobre (el compromiso cognitivo, conductual y emocional); además, los hallazgos revelaron ciertos temas emergentes con respecto al uso de las pausas humorísticas en la pedagogía. En resumen, los resultados del presente estudio respondieron a las preguntas de la investigación y confirmaron sus hipótesis.