The Use of Humour in Multicultural Classrooms: A Case Study of Teachers' and Students' Perceptions and Practices from a University ELICOS Centre

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STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE

I hereby certify that this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree or as part of requirements for a degree to any institution or university other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is my own work and, to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any unattributed materials previously published or written by any other person.

This study was granted approval by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research) (reference: **5201600712**) on November 10, 2016.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis reports on an investigation into the employment of humour in multicultural classrooms, focusing teachers' and students' perceptions and practices. A mixed method approach was used. Participants included 7 teachers and 104 students from a university ELICOS centre in an Australian city. Data were collected through class observations, teacher interviews and student questionnaires. First, teachers' practices of using humour, including the frequency of humour attempts and choices of different humour types, were obtained through class observations in which the researcher played the role of a non-participant observer. These teachers' perceptions of the role of humour in teaching and their preferences for certain humour forms were investigated through the subsequent interviews. In general, all the teachers were of the view that engaging some humour in language teaching would probably bring about more benefits rather than disadvantages, however, they warned against the use of too much humour, which might distract students from their studying. They also claimed that certain types of humour should be avoided in the classrooms so as not to cause misunderstanding or make students feel offended. The questionnaires for students aimed to investigate the students' perceptions of the humour-learning relationship as well as responses to their teachers' humour usage in class, and to look for patterns in demographic data: gender and nationality.

The findings show that the incorporation of humour in EFL teaching and learning was viewed positively by the teachers and students in this study. A classification of humour types including 4 main categories (related, unrelated, self-directed and other-directed humour) and 25 subcategories was inductively developed using the content analysis of the successful humour attempts by the teacher participants. Student gender and nationality were found to correlate with some aspects of their perceptions of humour as well as responses to their teachers' humour usage: on average, females expressed more positive

attitudes toward humour than males did, and non-Chinese students showed stronger agreement with the positive effects of humour on learning as well as preferring more frequent use of humour in teaching.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ELICOS: English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

ELC: English Language Centre

T: Teacher

L1: First language

L2: Second language

1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

Recent years have seen a growing interest in developing the methodology of language teaching and learning, especially since the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching. Researchers in general and educators in particular have been making every attempt to increase the teaching and learning quality by working out the most efficient teaching tools. Among them, the use of humour has now been taken into thorough consideration. To date, a substantial body of research exists investigating the effects of different humour types and their accompanying relationships with teaching and learning activities, and as a result, humour has been considered one of the most common devices which can be effectively employed in the classroom. There are various reasons for such employment which will be summarized below.

Literature has argued that humour is beneficial to humans in a number of ways, as it has been demonstrated that humour has not only physiological, psychological but also social benefits (Deneire, 1995; Stambor, 2006, Deiter, 2000). Physiologically, humour is able to improve respiration and circulation, decreasing pulse and blood pressure, exercising the chest muscles, increasing blood oxygenation, and releasing endorphins into the bloodstream (Deiter, 2000; Berk, 1998). Such benefits are of great help in reducing students' anxiety as well as relieving their stress, which, in Garner's (2006) opinion, are all "desirable things in pedagogical settings" (p. 177). Psychologically, the positive impact of humour and its most obvious indicator - laughter, has been indicated to reduce anxiety, decrease stress, improve self-esteem and enhance self-motivation (Berk, 1998). This can be explained that a person cannot feel anxious, angry or upset when he or she is laughing. In this way, laughter can even enable people to stay focused and accomplish more. Besides, humour is also regarded as a "bridge to connect educators and students by

demonstrating a shared understanding and a common psychological bond" (Garner, 2006, p. 177). When the rapport between students and the teacher is built, the students will be more forthcoming in asking questions or giving comments (Deiter, 2000), thus, they will engage in the lessons better. In addition, humour is also socially benign in the way that it is of help in enhancing relationships, improving teamwork and promoting a spirit of cooperation among people in the same social group. Within the classroom setting, the social function of humour is that through shared laughter, the class solidarity is affirmed and a common class culture could be developed (Senior, 2001). As a result, students' learning will be reinforced and the tasks may become less laborious, less threatening (Korrobin, 1988). Shared laughter means shared understanding, thus, when the teacher's humour is able to bring about laughter from students, it also means that the "barriers to communication" (Deiter, 2000, p. 22) between the teacher and students are broken down, and the teacher-student relationship is built and consolidated.

In short, humour not only brings about numerous benefits to humans' physical and mental health, but also contributes to building social relationship among people. Therefore, when appropriately incorporated during the lesson, humour will consequently bring about affective and cognitive benefits. Affectively, researchers have revealed that humour is of help in relaxing the students, creating a comfortable and motivating classroom atmosphere, building rapport between teachers and students, and making students feel safe (Deiter, 2000; Garner, 2006; Senior, 2001; Lei et al., 2010). Added to this, a number of empirical studies have indicated that teachers' employment of humour during teaching can have cognitive benefits as well. Specifically, humour helps students remember the lessons better, keep students stay focused on as well as interested in the lesson (Schmidt, 1994; Ziv, 1988; Deiter, 2000; White, 2001).

As can be seen from the vast number of studies mentioned above that the pedagogical impact arising from the use of humour in teaching has been widely examined among the researchers. Also, the revealed positive benefits of humour would suggest that

teachers may consider incorporating humour into the delivering of the lessons (Bell, 2009). The majority of research that has been done so far on humour in education focuses on mainstream education (Nguyen, 2014), for examples, Ziv (1988), Neuliep, (1991), Gorham & Christophel (1990); and only a limited number of studies have set out to explore the applications of humour in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (e.g., Askildson, 2005; Forman, 2011; Petraki & Nguyen, 2016).

As a matter of fact, nowadays, there are more and more international students trying to find a chance for their study at some of the world's education powerhouses, for example the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, South Africa, and Australia (Dalglish, 2002), and in such countries, the cultural backgrounds of students tend to be more diverse. However, as Bell (2009) states, the biggest challenge for the understanding of humour is culture, in these classroom settings, teachers may encounter possible risks on making an attempt to include humour into their teaching as they do not share the same cultural backgrounds as their students. To date, literature has not revealed a great deal about the interpretations of humour by different cultures and subcultures (Banas et al., 2011), therefore, we still lack an understanding of the extent to which humour can be successfully employed in multicultural classrooms by teachers. The present study was undertaken with a view to addressing this gap.

1.2 Purpose and significance of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the employment of humour as a teaching device by EFL teachers in multicultural classrooms at a university ELICOS centre in Australia. It is worth noting here that this research is situated in Australia where English is the primary national language, however, all the student participants in this study are short term visitors who study

English as their training pathway, and therefore, are still referred as EFL learners. The research setting, as Graves (2008) suggests, is target-language-embedded context, and in such context, "a language is learned either within or closely connected with a 'context of use', a surrounding context in which the target language is used" (p. 155).

The study aims to identify the extent to which EFL teachers at this centre use humour in their teaching, work out the types of humour used by these teachers and their perceptions of the roles of humour in language teaching, examine how students of different gender and different backgrounds respond to their teachers' use of humour during the lesson, and provide research-based humour types effective in classroom setting.

This study is significant at both theoretical and practical levels. Theoretically, by exploring the incorporation of humour in classroom settings where students come from different backgrounds, the study contributes to enriching the existing knowledge on the correlation between humour and education in general and EFL teaching in particular. On a practical level, it might be of help in equipping EFL teachers with effective activities as well as examples of humour forms which can be fully exploited to enhance the classroom atmosphere and motivate students' learning. This study will, therefore, be of potential value to teachers who want to employ humour in their teaching, but are afraid of possible risks that they may encounter as a result of not sharing cultural backgrounds with their students.

1.3 Scope of the study and thesis outline

The study explores the use of humour in EFL lessons in multicultural classrooms, specifically at a university ELICOS centre in Australia. The focus of the study is on the extent to which the teachers at this centre use humour during the lesson, their preferences for certain types of humour, the perceptions of the role of humour in EFL teaching and learning from these teachers' and their students' perspectives, and responses to humour use in class from the students at this centre.

The thesis consists of six chapters. The present chapter provides a rationale for the study, discusses its purposes, significance, and scope, and provides an outline of the study. Chapter 2 reviews previous research on humour, benefits of humour, as well as the relationship between humour and education. Chapter 3 provides details of the methodology, including how the data were collected, presented, and analysed. Chapter 4 and chapter 5 report and discuss the findings in order to address the research questions. These are summarised in the final chapter where a summary of key findings and limitations as well as recommendations for future research are also provided.

2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this chapter is firstly to explain the different concepts of humour taking the findings of previous research as a starting point. This serves as the basis for the choice of definition of humour used later in the study. Secondly, I review the literature on the employment of humour in second language teaching and learning, focusing on the affective and cognitive

impact of humour on student learning. The last section will summarize the various categories of humour which have been reported in the literature, and provide evidence for the gap that remains.

Generally, the existing literature shows that humour may be incorporated in education, however, research on teachers' use of humour in foreign language learning is still lacking, especially in the setting of students from multicultural backgrounds.

2.1 Definition of humour

Recently, literature has indicated that there are likely up to 500 definitions, concepts, notions, and interpretations of humour and laughter – the most obvious indicator of humour (Goodman, 1995). The great variations in the ways that the term "humour" is defined will be discussed in details below.

As a student of humour himself, Deiter (2000) produces a definition of humour which is mostly experience-based: humour is "anything that is perceived to be funny, comical or amusing" (p. 22). In his opinion, perception is the basis of understanding the word *humour*. And, he explains, humour is in the eyes and ears of the recipients. With regard to "funny" and "amusing", this definition seems to be consistent with dictionary definitions. Nevertheless, how a thing or a situation is perceived to be "funny" or "amusing" is hard to discover as Deiter does not mention the indicator of humour (i.e. laughter or any outward sign of appreciation). Added to this, there is a possibility that teachers' humour engagement may not be perceived as "funny" by students (for example, students may not understand some certain humour forms); thus, this definition does not cover every aspect of the term *humour*.

Identifying humour as a form of communication, Gulas and Weinberger (2006) claim that it is a process in which a stimulus is created to provide pleasure for an audience. In their opinion, the term humour is generally applied to all literature and to all informal speech or writing with a view to amusing or arousing laughter from the recipients (the reader or hearer). Unlike the above way of defining humour, Gulas and Weinberger's (2006) definition mentions laughter as an obvious indicator of humour, with the focus being the audience's perceptions. However, humour does not always result in laughter (Wang, 2014) and certain forms of humour (e.g., irony or sarcasm) may cause other people to feel uncomfortable or even offended.

As regards the relationship between humour and EFL teaching, different definitions of humour have been suggested.

In an attempt to show the relationship between humour in the EFL classroom and students' ability to remember vocabulary, Faulkner (2011) defines humour as "any physical action or spoken statement intentional or otherwise that causes the students to react by laughing, giggling and/or smiling" (p. 6). In this definition, laughing, giggling and smiling are mentioned as obvious indicators of humour. Humour includes both physical action and spoken statement and students' perceptions are the focus of understanding the word *humour*. Faulkner's (2011) definition seems to cover every aspect of humour used in the EFL classrooms, including indicators, humour types as well as students' perceptions, and according to his definition, humour in this case comes from the teachers. In fact, in the classroom, besides teachers' humour, students may also laugh at materials, the lesson content or class interactions (between students and students, students and the teacher). These are what Nguyen (2014), on investigating the use of humour in English teaching and learning in the context of Vietnam, mentions in his study:

> Humour: teacher-initiated attempts to stimulate laughter or amusement. These attempts may come from the materials, the lesson content, or classroom interactions (e.g. students' actions, or students' responses to teachers' questions), and will typically result in laughter or smiling (p. 24).

With the assumption that humour is not always transferrable among cultures, and that the concept of what is funny is different among various countries, Tuncay (2007) refers to humour as "understanding not only the language and words but their use, meaning, subtle nuances, the underlying culture, implications and unwritten messages" (p.2). The "underlying culture" mentioned in this definition requires a more complicated level of understanding of the word "humour" as Bell (2009) claims that the biggest challenge in understanding humour is culture. This aspect, in Nguyen's (2014) opinion, is often overlooked by other researchers as a result of their monolingual and monocultural research settings.

To conclude, although the definitions of humour among researchers are different, they reach a common agreement with each other that in broad terms, humour refers to whatever people say or do that is perceived as funny and is able to make others laugh, and also the mental processes that can both create and perceive such an amusing stimulus, as well as the affective response involved in the enjoyment of it.

With an attempt to investigate a taxonomy of humour types which can be effectively employed in multicultural EFL classroom, the current study mostly focuses on "successful humour", which allies with Deiter's (2000) point of view that "humour is in the eyes and ears of the beholders". I also employ Nguyen's 2014 concept of "teacher-initiated humour" as the focus of this study is the investigation into the use of humour in class by teachers. In other words, humour in this study refers to anything which is said or performed to create a feeling of fun and amusement in the classroom and causes students to burst into laughter or show other outward signs of appreciation. The use of humour, in this case, may range from the use of jokes, funny stories, anecdotes, and riddles to pictures, comics or even positive comments which bring about laughter from students.

The next section of this chapter will provide a brief summary of findings regarding the employment of humour in EFL classrooms reported by different researchers in the literature.

2.2 Humour in the EFL classroom

As mentioned before, a great number of researchers have explored the pedagogical implications regarding the use of humour in teaching. For the scope of the current study, this section will focus on reviewing the literature concerning the influence of humour in the English as a foreign/second language classroom.

In practice, language teachers are normally encouraged to incorporate humour in the classroom (Bell, 2009), and humour is also treated as a motivational teaching strategy (Dörnyei, 2001). However, it is interesting that there exists "an astonishing paucity of research focusing on humour in the language class" (Petraki & Nguyen, 2016, p.99). Of the limited number of empirical studies reported on the employment of humour in language classroom, it has been revealed that humour has affective as well as cognitive effects on student learning. These findings, supported the literature on the role of humour in mainstream education (for example, Bryant et al., 1980; Berk, 1996; Garner, 2006; Ziv, 1988; Gorham & Christophel, 1990).

The use of humour can bring about affective benefits by reducing students' tension or anxiety, improving approachability of teachers, increasing students' levels of interest, making students feel more confident, and creating a relaxing learning environment (Askildon, 2005; Petraki & Nguyen, 2016; Forman, 2011). Humour also has cognitive impact as it reduces affective barriers to language acquisition (Askildon, 2005), hence, is able to improve students' proficiency as well as ability to learn a language (Schmitz, 2002;

Askildon, 2005), help students understand the lesson more easily (Lucas, 2005; Petraki & Nguyen, 2016) and remember the language points better (Petraki & Nguyen, 2016). Some studies investigating language classroom humour will be discussed below.

Askildon (2005), with an attempt to investigate the effects of humour as a specific pedagogical tool as well as perceived benefits of humour within the EFL/ESL classroom, conducted a study with the participation of 236 foreign/second language learners and 11 foreign/second language instructors using a Likert-scaled questionnaire. Participants were asked to evaluate the use of humour in their language classrooms by choosing an option on an inclining scale for each response. The findings obtained reveals that the incorporation of humour into the context of second language pedagogy brings significant advantage to both the language teacher and learner.

Forman (2011), on observing an Anglo-Australian teacher teaching an EFL class of 31 students at a provincial Thai university, claimed that the teacher's employment of humorous language play in that lesson brought about "a warm, responsive atmosphere" with "considerable smiling and laughter in evidence" (p. 560). Such a positive learning atmosphere was of great help in that, as he reported, although the L2 production of those students was limited, "their desire and effort to participate was high" (p. 561).

Nguyen (2014), on examining university teachers' and students' perceptions and practices of using humour in EFL classrooms, conducted a study with the participation of 30 teachers and 162 students from three different universities in a large city in Vietnam. Data were collected through 30 class observations, 162 student questionnaires, 30 teacher and 11 student follow-up interviews. Nguyen's (2014) findings show that both the teacher and student participants in his study have positive view towards the use of

humour during the lesson. Such findings also strongly support the role of humour that has been reported in the literature in that teachers' incorporation of humour could provide students with affective and cognitive effects.

The findings reported in such studies suggest that the employment of humour into language classes may bring about valuable benefits and have positive effects on teaching and learning, hence, teachers should consider integrating humour into the lesson as a useful teaching tool. However, more research on humour in second language learning is still needed (Bell, 2009; Pomerantz & Bell, 2007, 2011), especially in the context of the multicultural classroom. The reported studies on the humour-learning relationship were all conducted in monolingual classrooms where the teachers and students share the same cultural backgrounds. As culture is the biggest challenge in understanding humour (Bell, 2009) and to date, literature has not reported much about the influence of humour on different cultures and subcultures (Banas et al., 2011). empirical studies on the impact of culture on are worth exploring. As an attempt to address this gap, the current study extended the context as a direction proposed in Nguyen's (2014) research by investigating the use of humour in multicultural classrooms.

2.3 Types of humour in the classroom

One of the most common issues which make the study of humour complicated is the variety in the types of humour (Wanzer et al,2006). In fact, with regard to the types of humour used in classrooms, literature reveals that a wide variety of different humour categories has been created by different researchers.

The first and most common humour typologies enacted in the classroom were developed by Bryant, Comisky, Crane & Zillman (1979), Gorham & Christophel (1990) and Neuliep (1991). These researchers rely on a number of criteria as justification for

their categorization: types of humour (whether the humour is in the forms of jokes or riddles, etc.), "victims[1]" of humour (whether the humour is directed at self, student, or other), content of humour (whether the humour is directed at the topic, the university/ state, or the nation/ world), relatedness of humour to the lesson, as well as levels of humour preparation (whether the humour is prepared or spontaneous). Though these typologies of humour were either deductively developed (Bryant et al.'s) or inductively developed (Gorham & Christophel's and Neuliep's), they were built on and confirmed one another. Among these studies, Neuliep's (1991) research was the first to explicitly investigate the appropriateness of humour in the classroom, however, only teacher perceptions were examined. Such limitation suggests the necessity to conduct further research to investigate student perceptions of humour appropriateness as "perceptions of effectiveness and appropriateness are contextual, and therefore, must involve the perceptions of all interactants" (Wanzer et al., 2006, p. 181).

Using constant comparative methods, Wanzer et al. (2006) classified student-generated humour examples into appropriate and inappropriate humour categories. The appropriate humour with four broad humour categories (related, unrelated, self-disparaging and unintentional humour) was similar to the reported classifications by Bryant et al. (1979) and Gorham & Christophel (1990). The four categories of inappropriate humour were labelled as offensive, student disparaging, other disparaging and self-disparaging humour. The Wanzer et al. (2006) taxonomy of humour types is a fairly comprehensive list of both appropriate and inappropriate examples of humour that teachers can employ in the classroom (Frymier et al., 2008); however, their findings also showed the overlap between appropriate and inappropriate categories of humour, i.e. some forms of humour were identified as both appropriate and inappropriate. For example, student-targeted humour or self-

[1]The term "victim" was used by Bryant et al. (1979).

disparaging humour was identified as both appropriate and inappropriate. Such interesting finding called for further research on the scale of humour appropriateness, which was then conducted by Frymier, Wanzer and Wojtaszczyk (2008). Frymier et al. (2008) conducted a factor analysis of the Wanzer et al. (2006) classification of humour. With a view to extending Wanzer et al. (2006)'s research, Frymier et al. made an attempt to develop a measure of humour behaviour so that variations in students' perceptions of appropriate teacher humour could be identified. These researchers were also interested in exploring the explanations for why some certain forms of humour would be perceived appropriate or inappropriate. Consequently, their study resulted in five major categories: other-disparaging, self-disparaging, related, unrelated and offensive humour. Such categories were similar to the "appropriate" and "inappropriate" categories identified by Wanzer et al. (2006), although several subcategories in Wanzer et al.'s classification were not kept in these five dimensions. One limitation of the Frymier et al.'s classification is that students in their study based their evaluations of appropriateness and inappropriateness of teacher humour on the provided humour categories, not on their teachers' actual humour behaviours, hence, whether a specific teacher in practice uses such behaviours or not is still unknown.

It is worth noting here that the different taxonomies of humour reviewed above were conducted in the field of general education, and the appropriateness and inappropriateness of humour in the classroom were only evaluated in mainstream education. As humour is a multifaceted phenomenon (Wagner & Urios-Aparisi,2011), and "the language classroom is an inherently face-threatening environment, with learners being expected to communicate using a severely restricted code" (Dörnyei, 2001, p.91), there may be differences in effectiveness of these humour categories in the context of foreign language classroom. In fact, the role of humour as well as the humour types which have positive effects in foreign language teaching and learning have been investigated in a recent study by Wagner and Urios-Aparisi (2011).

In their study, Wagner and Urios-Aparisi suggested a multidisciplinary approach and introduced a coding scheme for exploring the use of humour in the foreign language classroom. Their coding scheme "incorporates multiple levels of description of humour" (p. 413) in the foreign language classroom, including the traditional types used in humour studies, and the humour categories employed in classroom studies. These researchers finally provided a detailed taxonomy of humour adapted from different categories reported in the literature. Types of humour were coded and classified basing on the production of humour, the interpretation and reception of humour, functions of humour and the content delivered through humour. Some codes absent from the literature were also added by the researchers when needed.

These categories are shown in the following table:

Table 2.1. Wagner & Urios-Aparisi's (2011) categories of humour.

Production of humour	Types of humour
	Types of jokes
	Wit
	Humoristic activities
Interpretation and reception of humour	Types of response to humorous event
	Types of response to humorous event in the classroom
	Reaction to teasing incidents
	Effect on classroom atmosphere
Social functions of humour	Social management
	Decommitment
	Mediation
	Defunctionalisation
Types of content	Cultural information (explicitely/ implicitely conveyed)
	Grammatical information
	Other

(For details of subcategories, see Appendix in Wagner and Urios-Aparisi (2011))

It cannot be denied that the suggested categories of humour by Wagner and Urios-Aparisi (2011) were by far the most comprehensive as these categories were coded basing both on findings of reported studies and on the researchers' data collection and analysis. However, in their study, it is not clear as to whether the "added codes" were deductively or inductively classified. As a result, how they arrived at the additional categories was still unexplored. Also, it is not possible to

know whether or not there exists any overlap among the categories. For example, in practice, a teacher may use student-directed humour to illustrate the material being taught, hence, in this case, such humour could also be categorized as related humour. Or, self-directed humour may be labelled as unrelated humour if it is not related to the lesson content. The various classifications of humour types reviewed above suggest that, there may be no certain or fixed taxonomy of humour categories which can be successfully employed in every teaching setting. In fact, depending on particular contexts, an individual teacher may have their own ways of creating humour in their classroom. Furthermore, considering the fact that up to recently, there has been no research investigating teachers' humour use in adult multicultural context, this research paper was set out with an attempt to explore the types of humour that EFL teachers would employ in such classroom setting, and to examine how well the humour incidences in the current study would fit the reported categories in the literature after the content analysis of the examples of humour by the teacher participants.

In summary, the review of the preceding literature has suggested a number of gaps in the research on the humour-learning relationship. First of all, the majority of humour research reported was conducted in mainstream education. Of the limited number of studies on humour carried in EFL classrooms, many of them have focused on the affective and/or cognitive benefits of humour, not on the teachers' or students' perceptions and practices of using humour (except for the study by Petraki & Nguyen (2016) which was situated in monolingual classroom). Added to this, although different taxonomies of humour have been studied in detail, such taxonomies have not been adopted in the context of multicultural EFL classroom to see how effectively they may work. Taken all these into consideration, the current study made an attempt to extend the study by Petraki & Nguyen (2016) by investigating the employment of humour in multicultural classroom, focusing on language teachers' and students' perceptions and practices.

Research questions developed as a result of this literature review are stated in the next section.

3 CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design of the study, namely the mixed methods research. Firstly, the research questions and overall design of the study are presented. It continues with the rationale and description of the data collection methods used in this study, including student questionnaires, class observation and teacher interview. The chapter ends with a description of the participants, data collection procedure, and the process of data analysis.

3.1 Research questions and design

The purpose of this study is to investigate the employment of humour as a teaching device in EFL[2] lessons in the setting of multicultural classrooms in a university ELICOS centre in Australia.

The focus of the study is teachers' and students' perceptions and practices, as well as the possible impact of gender and nationality on perceptions of humour. To do this, the study addresses the five research questions:

1. To what extent do EFL teachers use humour in adult multicultural classrooms?
2. What types of humour do EFL teachers use in adult multicultural classrooms and in which context?
3. What are EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of the role[s] of humour in adult multicultural classrooms?
4. What are the responses of students from different backgrounds towards their teachers' use of humour in the lesson?
5. Do students' perceptions of humour vary depending on student gender or nationalities?

The first four research questions were adopted from Nguyen's (2014) study as both studies aimed to explore the employment of humour in EFL classrooms, but in different education settings (monolingual vs. multicultural classroom context). This decision was made in order to compare the results obtained, as for advancement of the field, it is helpful if the results of research studies are able to be compared (the comparison will be presented in the discussion chapter).

A concurrent mixed methods approach combining both qualitative and quantitative methods was selected as offering the most flexible approach to exploring these questions. Data about the teachers' practices of using humour and their perceptions

[2]See also 1.2 for justification for the term EFL in this particular context.

of the role of humour were collected through class observations and interviews respectively. Results regarding students' responses to their teachers' use of humour were obtained through both class observation and a student questionnaire. The visual model of the design employed in this study is shown below.

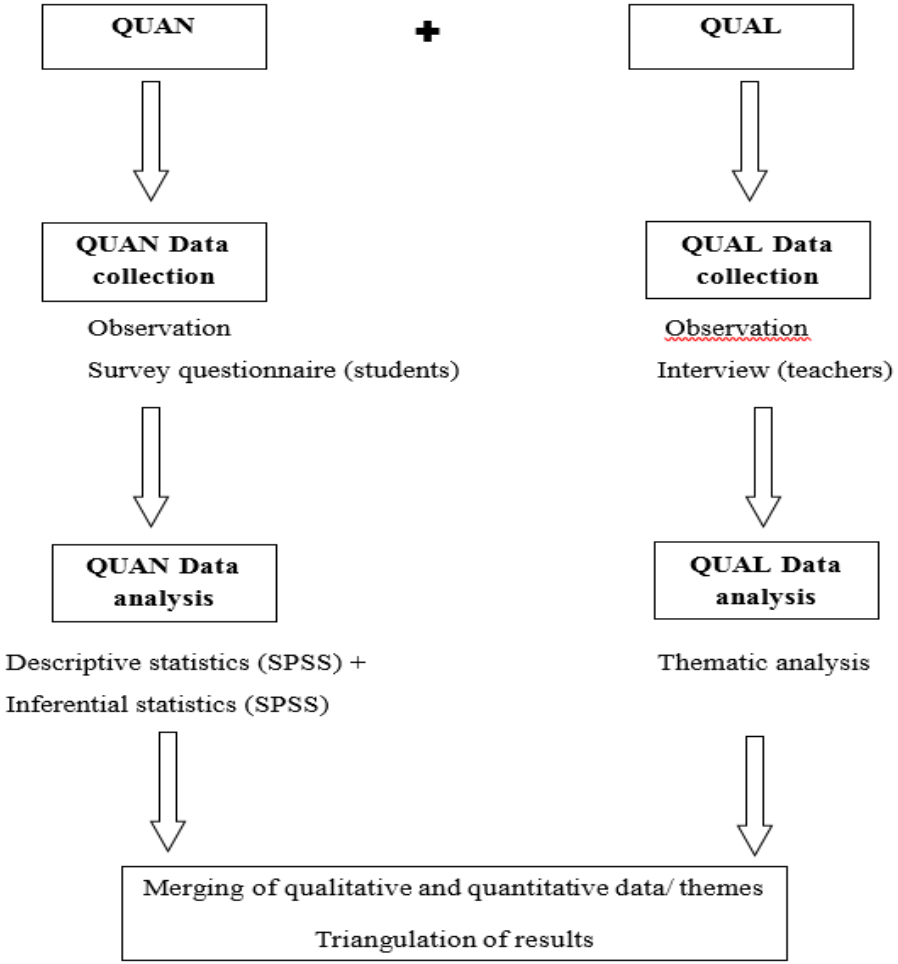


Figure 3.1: The research design (adapted from Creswell et al., 2003)

3.2 Discussion of methodological approach

In this study, I employed a mixed methods research approach (Creswell, 2012 & 2013), which combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches, with a view to capturing a more comprehensive understanding of the study through multiple methods. This approach is defined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) as the process in which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected, analysed and mixed in a single study or a series of studies to interpret a research problem. A combination of both quantitative and qualitative data is beneficial in the sense that the former yields useful information about results whereas the latter "develops a more in-depth understanding of how the experimental intervention actually worked" (Creswell, 2012, p. 535). Added to this, the use of various procedures of data collection would possibly enhance the validity and reliability of the data and their interpretation (Zohrabi, 2013).

The main source of quantitative data in the present study was obtained through the student survey questionnaires. The use of this data collection method was crucial for the following reasons. First of all, in previous studies concerning students' responses towards their teachers' use of humour in language classroom, questionnaire was the most commonly used method (e.g., Berk, 1996; Askildon, 2005; Frymier et al., 2008). It was thought that following the same practice, which was examined and validated in the literature, would help in enhancing the validity of findings. Added to this, participants in this study were overseas students coming from different backgrounds, at different levels, studying at different time sessions, and both genders were included; hence, with regard to time, effort and financial resources (Dörnyei, 2003, 2007; Dörnyei& Taguchi, 2009), the use of questionnaires enabled the researcher to obtain opinions from a large number of respondents in a quicker, easier and more economical way.

In addition, with the aim of studying humour as a phenomenon occurring during the process of teaching and learning, it would be impossible for the researcher to measure the participants' emotions and experiences by means of figures, tables or graphs. In this case, direct observation has proved an effective way to explore humour application as the observational data can be used "to *describe* the setting that was observed, the activities that took place in that setting, the people who participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspective of those observed" (Patton, 1990, p. 202, italics in original). Thus, the qualitative approach was also employed so that the researcher could "concentrate on an in-depth understanding of the meaning in particular" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 27) and that the depth of what the participants had to say could be obtained.

With all these considerations in mind, the researcher adopted the integration of quantitative and qualitative via mixed methods. The use of mixed methods has become more and more prominent as there are a number of advantages of employing mixed methods in a single study: it can increase the strength while eliminating the weakness, multi-level analysis of complex issues is gained, the validity of the research is improved and it can reach multiple audiences (Dörnyei, 2007).

There are a number of mixed methods research designs, depending on the sequence of collecting quantitative and qualitative data (concurrently or sequentially), on the priority or weight given to quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research (both are of equal importance or one is more dominant than the other) and on the stage(s) where the two forms of data are "mixed" (Creswell, 2012, 2013). In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were exploited at the same time. The qualitative approach was given more priority in order to fully explore the depth of participants' perceptions and practices. As Creswell (2013) claims, such characteristics belong to the category of concurrent triangulation design.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

This section provides more detail about the instruments used in the process of collecting data. The purposes of each instrument and also the steps in the procedure of the data collection are provided. The multiple sources of collecting data, including student questionnaires, class observation and teacher interviews, will be discussed in detail below.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaire in this research paper was adapted from Askildson (2005) (See Appendix 2). In his study, Askildson (2005) used two versions of a questionnaire – one was for students and the other was for teachers. His research focus was teachers' and students' perceptions of the use and effects of humour in second language classrooms. All the questions in Askildson's questionnaire (student version), which referred to the students' perceptions of the role of humour in language teaching as well as their responses to their teachers' humour usage, were put into statements employing the six point Likert-type format. The questions requiring students to rate their instructors' effectiveness as a teacher and exploring students' frequency of using humour to communicate in learning were eliminated as they were beyond the objectives of the present study. The use of an even number of response options helped the researcher to eliminate the possibility that some certain respondents might use the middle category instead of making a real choice (Dörnyei, 2003; Dörnyei& Taguchi, 2009).

The initial questionnaire was first given to 3 other research students working in the same department with the researcher for their feedback. Based on such useful comments, the researcher was able to produce a more satisfactory list of questions

(while retaining the original purpose of each question) by eliminating confusing content and improving clarity of expression. In order to see how these items worked in actual practice, the questionnaire was given to a group of 46 students who had similar characteristics with the target respondents that the instrument was designed for (Dörnyei, 2007). These students were not included as participants in the actual survey after that. The Cronbach's alpha was then obtained to test internal consistency (hence reliability) of the items in the pilot questionnaire. Such items yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, which indicated that the questionnaire had an acceptable level of internal consistency. No items were deleted to raise the alpha coefficient. Figure 3.2 below shows the result from the Cronbach's alpha reliability test.

Reliability
Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	46	92.0
	Excluded[a]	4	8.0
	Total	50	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items

.889	11

Figure 3.2: The Cronbach's alpha reliability test.

The piloting of the questionnaire at two different stages was of great importance and was "an essential part of quantitative research" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 75) which ensured the quality of the items in the question list. The final questionnaire consisted of 18 statements, including students' general background information (age, gender, English study history), their attitudes towards their teachers' use of humour in the class and their perceptions of the role of humour in language teaching. The original English version was translated into various languages with the help of students undertaking the Translating and Interpreting Practicum from Macquarie University. The translations were first undertaken by students and then checked and corrected by professional translators. The translated versions were used for students at lower levels (General English pre-intermediate and intermediate classes) so that any misunderstanding or confusion of the questions could be avoided. For General English upper intermediate and Academic English classes, the students could cope well with the English version.

The learning process at the centre where the research was conducted took place through a 4-hour period with a 20-minute break. The questionnaires were delivered to the students right after the break, which guaranteed a high response rate. The researcher was there while the students completed the form so further explanation was given immediately when needed. The researcher collected the questionnaires after the students completed them. A total number of 104 questionnaires were collected. The response rate was 100 %. All the students who were recruited to answer the questionnaires came from the classes which the researcher observed, and the questionnaires delivered to the students after her class observation.

3.3.2 Observation

Observation is the process in which researchers are able to collect "open-ended and firsthand information by observing people and places at certain research sites" (Creswell, 2012, p. 213). It can take place through two methods: *nonparticipant* (the observer just watches and records the classroom activities without any involvement) and *participant,* during which the observer takes part in the activities in the classroom with the students (Zohrabi, 2013).

In Creswell's (2012) view, not one role is suited to all situations, and "observational roles vary depending on your comfort at the site, your rapport with participants and how best you can collect data to understand the central phenomenon" (p.214). He also states that the observer's role may range from a pure observer, through an observer-participant, to a participant-observer (Creswell, 2012 & 2013). These roles reveal different levels of participation that an observer can assume within the context they are observing. For the purpose of this study – to investigate what really occurred during the process of teaching and learning through teachers' and students' behaviours and practices – the researcher just sat on the periphery or some advantageous place to observe the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2012), hence assuming the role of a pure observer.

During the observation process, field notes and an audio recorder were simultaneously used. The field notes used in this study (Appendix 9) were both descriptive and reflective (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2012), which helped to note the examples and contexts of teachers' humour, the students' reactions towards such humour use and the researcher's general comments. These field notes were used as a cue during the interviews with the teachers afterwards. The teachers' voice was also recorded with the help of the audio-recorder. With a view to "capturing" all instances of teachers' verbal humour without putting any pressure on students, the researchers managed to ask the teachers to wear a mike with the recorder put in their

pockets. All the teacher participants were willing to be recorded during their teaching process. The combination of field notes and audio recordings during observation enabled the researcher to observe both physical and visual humour as well as verbal humour, together with the clearest indicator of successful humour – students' laughter.

To get the most reliable data, the researcher conducted three pilot observations with three first teachers. The official sessions took place a week later. This practice was of great help in making the researcher familiar with the use of field notes so that as much information could be obtained as possible. After greeting and briefly explaining the objectives of the study to the class, the researcher chose a seat at the end of the class so as not to distract students' attention and so it would be convenient for her to take notes as well as observe the whole class activities.

As a result of the lesson types and teaching procedure, for teacher 5 and teacher 6, the researcher just attended two hours per each class only. The researcher observed the whole class session – which lasted four hours – with the other five teachers.

The table on the next page shows the features of the classes observed.

Table 3.1. Features of classes observed.

Number of classes	Class observed	Length
1.	General English (Upper Intermediate)	4 hours (20 minute-break)
2.	General English (Pre-intermediate)	4 hours (20 minute-break)
3.	Academic[3]	4 hours (20 minute-break)
4.	General English (Upper Intermediate)	4 hours (20 minute-break)
5.	Academic	2 hours
6.	Academic	2 hours
7.	General English	4 hours (20 minute-break)

[3] The academic level includes advanced students with an overall IELTS band score from 6.0

	(Intermediate)	

3.3.3 Interview

This study employed the semi-structured form of interview (see Appendix 3 for the list of questions in the interview). The semi-structured interview is the most commonly used in applied linguistic research (Dörnyei, 2007; Heigham & Croker, 2009). It is a "compromise" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 136) between the two types of interview (structured and unstructured) in the sense that the interviewer, at the same time, follows list of pre-prepared questions, provides guidance and direction but also allows adequate flexibility for the interviewee to elaborate on certain issues and probe some aspects in depth (Dörnyei, 2007; Heigham & Croker, 2009). With this type of interview, the interviewer does not have to follow a number of set questions in a fixed order. Instead, some core questions or themes are suggested and will be covered during the interview. Hence, the semi-structured interview is more appropriate in situations where the interviewer has a clear overview of the topics that he/she needs to cover and is willing to let the interview flow in a natural way so that the respondents can feel they will take part in "a conversation with a purpose" (Heigham & Croker, 2009, p. 186) with no factors affecting the depth and the breadth of the interviewees' responses.

Before conducting the actual interviews, with the help of one teacher who was not included as the participant of the study, the researcher undertook a pilot one first. The purpose of the pilot interview was to make the researcher familiar with the pre-prepared items in the interview list (except for the one about the type of humour already used in the lesson because the researcher did not attend her class) as well as the way to make probe questions so that respondents could freely express

deeper information about their perceptions and practices. This practice was encouraged by Dörnyei (2007) and Heigham & Croker (2009) with a view to ensuring that sufficiently rich data could be elicited and that the interviewer would not dominate the flow of the interview.

Depending on their time schedule, interviews with the teachers took place right after the researcher's observation or within the following week. The observation notes and recordings were used to help the teachers relive what they had done in the lessons. For the purpose of data analysis, the interviews were recorded. All the interviews took place in quiet areas like the meeting room, the conversation room or in the teachers' offices so that the privacy and good sound quality of the recordings could be assured. For the first few minutes of the interviews, the researcher just asked some personal questions about the teachers' jobs and hobbies. Such questions served the role of initial ice-breakers and made the respondents feel relaxed, which helped to improve the quality of the subsequent responses later in the interviews (Dörnyei, 2007). The researcher used a set of "core" questions to ensure that all major issues were mentioned. The order of the questions was flexible: when the respondents referred to a certain point, the interviewer would ask follow-up questions without having to return to that point later. Before and after class observations as well as before the interviews, the teachers and the researcher had some chats with each other about different topics, therefore, the rapport between the interviewer and interviewee was like that of friendship or colleagueship, which did not put any pressure on the teachers to give any particular kind of responses. In fact, all the teachers were encouraged to participate in a conversation on a certain topic with the researcher rather than an interview. All the recordings were then transcribed by the researcher herself.

3.4 Settings

The study was conducted at a university English Language Centre (ELC) located in Sydney, Australia. This centre was set up in 1990 by the Australian Government, with more than 1,000 students graduating from the centre every year. The centre provides a range of English language programs, including General English, Academic English and professional English courses. On studying here, students have opportunities to choose different courses which are suitable for their study, ranging from General English, Academic English, University Entry Preparation to Introductory Academic Program (University's website[4], 2016). The courses at ELC prepare students for their later study at the university. The website reports that academic study skills as well as English language skills are taught by highly experienced teaching staff. Students of the Centre come from many countries around the world with the most numerous being Chinese students.

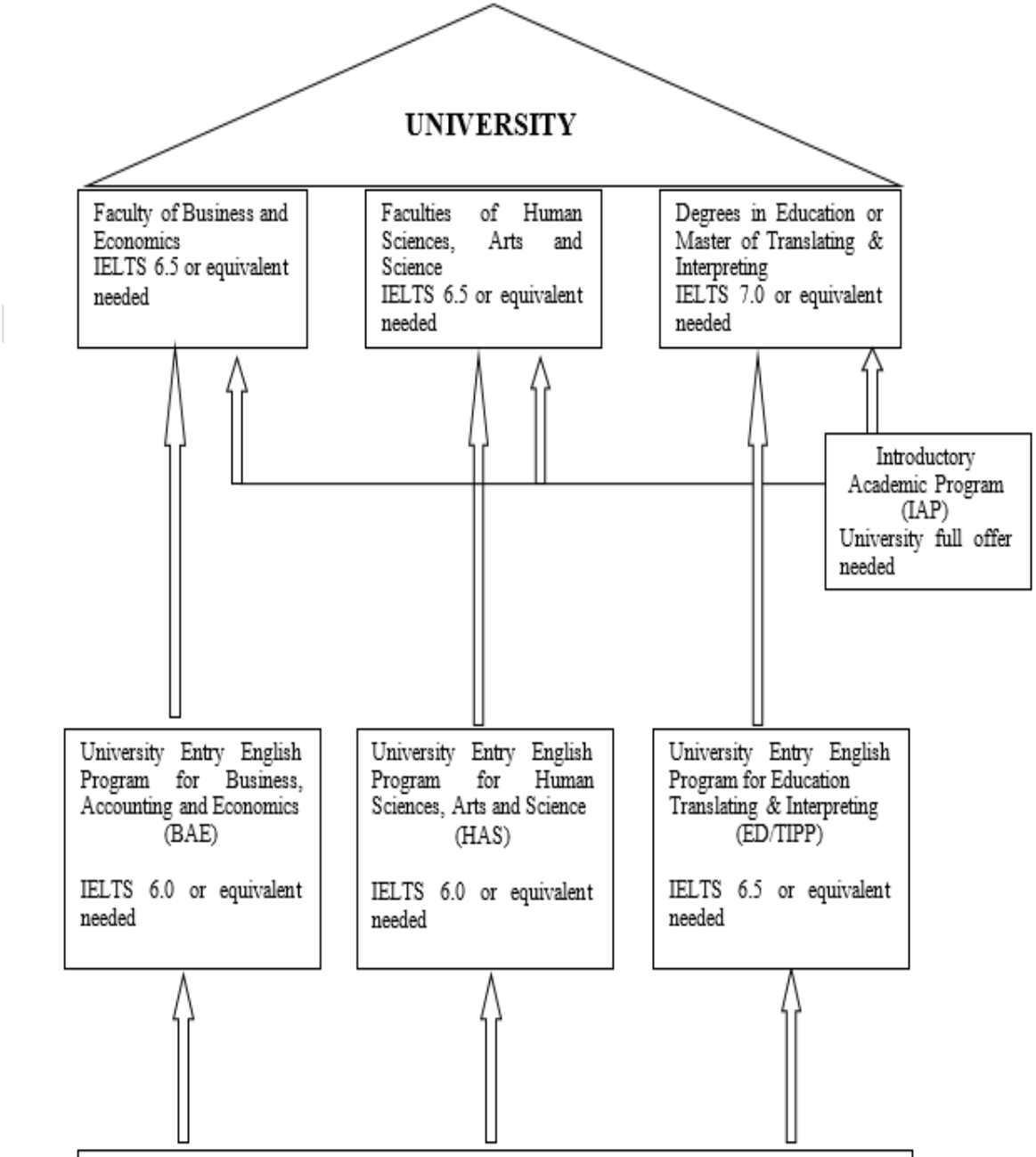
With regard to the type of school, language courses as well as types of students, all these characteristics make this centre a fairly typical university English preparation centre as well as an interesting case for the present study

(See some comparable structures of other ELICOS centre at the following websites: http://sydney.edu.au/cet/,
https://icte.uq.edu.au/english-courses,
https://www.languages.unsw.edu.au/,
https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/thecollege/english_programs)

[4]For ethical reasons it is not possible to give the source as this would identify the centre.

Figure 3.3 below shows the pathways available for English Language Preparation that students may get on choosing to study at this Centre:

Figure 3.3: Pathways available for English Language Preparation at ELC



3.5 Participants

In an exploratory study of this scope, it is not really possible to claim that participants are "typical" or a representative sample of teachers and students. In fact, the number of participants was dependent on the number of volunteers.

First, the teacher participants were not balanced in terms of gender (1 male and 6 females). These teachers were all English native speakers and middle-aged. Other schools or ELICOS centres may involve teachers more diverse in age as well as cultural backgrounds. Added to this, the majority of the student participants were Chinese, which made it more difficult to realise the plan of comparing the perceptions of students from various cultural backgrounds. Thus, the findings later just included comparison between two groups: Chinese and non-Chinese, of which non-Chinese group involved participants from 8 different countries. Also, all the respondents were high level students and academically inclined, which might not reveal significant results to a broader population. For that reason, the data were treated as specific to the context and no claims of generalizability are made.

3.5.1 Teacher participants

In total, there were 7 teacher participants of both genders participating in the study. The teachers' features varied with regard to age, gender, levels of students in their classes and especially teaching experience (ranging from 1 year to 43 years). All the teachers are English native speakers, which seems to be a preference of most international students who expect to improve their English language skills. During the time of the study, each teacher took over one or two groups of students, either in the morning or afternoon sessions. Classes run from 8.30 a.m. to 12.45 p.m. for morning sessions and between 1.00 and 5.00 p.m.

for afternoon ones. The teachers were on campus all day on the day of their classes, which was convenient in arranging a time for interviews with the researcher afterwards.

Table 3.2 on the next page presents the characteristics of the teacher participants in this study.

Table 3.2: Teachers' Features

Teachers	Age	Gender	Teaching experience (years)	Class observed
T1	53	Male	5	General English (Upper mediate)
T2	45	Female	1	General English (Pre-intermediate)
T3	64	Female	40	Academic
T4	43	Female	19	General English (Upper mediate)
T5	61	Female	20	Academic
T6	67	Female	43	Academic
T7	60	Female	40	General English (Intermediate)

3.5.2 Student Participants

There were a total of 104 students (44 males and 60 females) participating in answering the questions in the questionnaires. It was interesting to note here that the student characteristics varied in terms of English background knowledge (from pre-intermediate to academic levels), age, genders and nationalities. The participants included 8 Koreans, 18 Japanese, 71 Chinese and 7 from other countries (Vietnam, Colombia, Iran, Russia, Thailand, and Turkey). All participants were undertaking a 5-week course as a training pathway before officially starting their study at university, either for undergraduate Bachelor's degree or Master's degree.

The table below presents a summary of the students' characteristics in this study.

Table 3.3: Students' features

Nationality	**Number and Gender**		**Level (Class)**	**Total number/per country**
	Male	***Female***		
Chinese	32	39	Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate, Academic	71
Japanese	5	13	Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate, Academic	18
Korean	3	5	Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate	8
Vietnamese		2	Academic	2
Thai		1	Academic	1
Iranian	1		Academic	1
Russian	1		Upper Intermediate	1
Colombian	1		Upper Intermediate	1
Turkish	1		Intermediate	1
Total	**44**	**60**		**104**

3.6 Data collection procedure

The study followed the procedures approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Macquarie University, Australia (see Appendix 1 for Ethics approval). Initial contact was made with the Head of ELC to get permission to conduct the study at the Centre, then a meeting with the Head of ELC and the senior teacher of the Centre was set up. With their assistance, the recruitment advertisement (Appendix 6) was sent to all the teachers working at the Centre via group email. The volunteer teachers were provided with information about the purposes of the study, and the procedure and activities included. They were also assured that there was no risk in becoming a part of the study, that the data obtained from class observations and interviews would be kept confidential, and that they could withdraw from the research at any stages without any consequences and without having to give reasons. In addition, they could decide whether a summary of the results would be sent to them or not. The teachers consent forms (Appendix 8) were signed on the day of the interviews with the researcher and copies of Consent Forms were provided.

The student recruitment information (Appendix 7), which explained the research aims and activities included, was presented on the day the researcher attended the classes. The researcher greeted the students, introduced herself and asked for their help with the questionnaires later on. The researcher then emphasized that the anonymity of the respondents of the questionnaire was ensured because no personal information about them was needed. Students were aware that participation or non-participation did not have any influences on their learning process and results and that no one except for the researcher could get access to the information they provided in the questionnaires.

3.7 Data analysis

As the study employed the concurrent triangulation design, it was deemed a concurrent form of analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Guest, 2013), that is, "data sets are analysed separately and mixed in the interpretation stage" (Guest, 2013, p. 143).

First of all, results from the student questionnaire were assigned a numeric score (Creswell, 2012), ranging from 1 to 6 ("strongly disagree" received a score of 1 and that of "strongly agree" was 6). The responses from the students were put into and calculated with SPSS (Pallant, 2007; Field, 2009). The distribution of students' responses was first calculated in the form of percentages to work out the frequency of appearance for each item, then an independent t-test was used to make a comparison between different groups in terms of gender (males and females) and nationality (Chinese and non-Chinese). By this practice, the quantitative data analysis was both a descriptive and an inferential analysis (Creswell, 2012).

The observations were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The humour attempts by the teachers observed were identified by the student response (laughter), counted and classified. Thus, any instances of unsuccessful humour (where there was no observed reaction) were not included. It is worth noting here that as examples of humour were identified based on students' laughter, any humour incidence which caused some or all of the class to laugh was regarded as "successful humour". The recordings of all the observed lessons were used as an assistance device which enabled the researcher to recognise the humour while analysing the data. Students' reactions towards their teachers' use of humour when teaching were also taken into consideration.

With an attempt to examine how well the humour incidences in the current study would fit the reported categories in the literature after the content analysis of the examples of humour by the teacher participants, the following steps were adopted during the data analysis process:

1. The applicability of the classifications proposed by the previous researchers working in monolingual contexts was examined by coding and categorizing the observed teachers' humour examples to see how well they would fit such taxonomies. Those humour incidences were then categorized as "existing humour categories" and "new emerging humour categories".

2. For the "existing humour categories":

a. If the examples of humour belong to an individual category of a particular taxonomy, I adapted that category basing on the contexts of the present study.

E.g.: The example "That never happens: The boys never beat the girls" (T1) belong to the category "Humorous comment" as classified by Bryant et al. (1979). This category was considered too broad to be applicable to the analysis of my data. It was more useful to propose a more precise category: "The teacher uses a humorous comment which is not related to the course content" in this study.

b. If the examples of humour could potentially have been allocated to several of the pre-existing categories in the already established taxonomies, then a new category was generated which better captured the essential features of the example.

E.g. One student said "I don't know" on being asked to give answer. His teacher replied "You're not sure? A good answer". This example would have been categorised under "Humorous comments" by Bryant et al. (1979), "Brief tendentious comment directed at an individual student" by Gorham and Christophel (1990), "The teacher makes a brief humorous comment directed at an individual student" by Neuliep (1991), "Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)" by Wanzer et al. (2006) or "Other-disparaging (Teases students in class)"by Frymier et al. (2008).Given the limitations in the pre-existing taxonomies (See also 2.3), another category was developed: "The teacher teases or makes fun of an individual student in class in a light-hearted way". This was different from the pre-existing categories in that it excluded inappropriate humour.

3. The examples of humour belonging to the "new emerging humour categories" (categories emerging from this particular context) were categorized basing on the relatedness to the materials being taught or the objects that such humour were addressed at. If the teachers' humour referred to the issues or topics relevant to the course content, or for the purpose of illustrating the materials being taught, it would be labelled as "related humour". If that humour referred to the issues or topics outside the course content, it was "unrelated humour". The teacher's humour incidences would be classified as "self-directed humour" or "other-directed humour" if those examples of humour were directed at the teachers themselves or at the students/ others respectively. Table 3.4 shows some examples of these categories.

Table 3.4. Examples of emerging humour categories.

Examples	Categories
One teacher recited the sentence "Always read the	Related humour

questions first" and moved his body in time with the words to instruct the students to read the questions before listening.	
One teacher asked the students to make a human pyramid.	Unrelated humour
One teacher invented humorous things about a student's characteristic: "--- (a male student's name) likes going out with girls every weekend".	Other-directed humour
One teacher introduced herself "I'm a super star, I'm going to be famous".	Self-directed humour

However, on defining these categories (related, unrelated, self-directed and other directed humour), there was one issue arising that some examples of humour could be either "other-directed" or "related humour" as the teachers used the students as a humorous example to illustrate the materials. Similarly, some "other-directed humour" could be "unrelated humour" as they were not related to the course content.

E.g.: One teacher used the example "--- (a student's name) came to my house and stole things. He is a burglar" to elicit the meaning of the word "burglar".

Thus, to eliminate this overlap (which was also not explored in the suggested categories by Wagner and Urios-Aparisi, 2011), as well as take the existing categories of humour mentioned above into consideration, the following, more refined, categories were derived:

- **Related humour:** humour about issues, topics relevant to the course content or used to illustrate the materials being taught. This category of humour could be targeting at or not targeting at a specific person.
- **Unrelated humour:** humour about issues, topics outside the course content and not targeting at a specific person.
- **Other-directed humour:** humour not related to the course content/ teaching materials and targeting at students/ others.
- **Self-directed humour:** humour not related to the course content/ teaching materials and targeting at the teachers themselves.

These categories were developed basing on the various taxonomies as discussed in section 2.3, taking the limitations argued in such reported taxonomies into consideration. The inappropriate humour was excluded and the existing overlap between categories was also excluded.

All the incidences of humour were noted during the class observations and the analysis of the transcripts of the teachers' voice recordings. The data analysis resulted in a total of 25 respective subcategories. These categories were used as the basis in the discussion of the types of humour used by EFL teacher participants in the present study. Outcomes are discussed in details in the findings chapter (section 4.2.1).

The interviews with teachers were manually transcribed verbatim and analysed by the researcher. This practice was encouraged by Creswell (2012) as only a small number of participants and a small database were included in the study. The interview scripts were qualitatively transcribed following the thematic analysis (Murray, 2009; Talmy, 2011) to look for themes and categories employed by the respondents. First, text segments of data (Creswell, 2012) were identified and coded. The text segments in the interview transcripts in this study included words, phrases or sentences which were related to humour. Different segments of the transcript referring to humour were given the same code. The next step to do with the data set was categorization. In this step, the researcher compared and contrasted across different pieces of coded data to pull the similar or related codes together to reduce the number of overlapping ones and form categories. From these themes and their relations, a core category was chosen as a basis for the discussion (Creswell, 2012). Accuracy of the coding was checked by asking assistance from peers. A randomly prepared sample of 10% of the examples were given to three colleagues, to code. Interrater reliability was 81 %, 81 % and 83 % respectively.

On completing the separate analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher "merge[d] the two database" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 221) to verify the teachers' perceptions and practices of humour in class as well as students' attitudes towards their teachers' use of humour.

4 CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In this chapter, results obtained from student questionnaires, class observations and teacher interviews are presented.

The first section of this chapter includes the results obtained from the questionnaires with students. The two main themes in the questionnaires, around which the questions were designed, included students' perceptions of *(1)* their teachers' use of

humour and *(2)* the relationship between humour and learning. First of all, results gained from the whole group of students was presented. Then comparisons were made to see whether there were any differences between these two themes among different groups of students: males versus females and Chinese versus non-Chinese.

The second section shows the results gained from teacher participants. This section is divided into two parts. The first part shows the reports of teachers' use of humour in the lessons that the researcher observed. These include the frequency that a teacher attempted to use humour, the types of humour used and the effects of that teacher's use of humour as perceived by the researcher during her observation. In the next part of the section, the results from teacher interviews with the researcher are presented. All the teachers interviewed are also those whose lessons were observed by the researcher.

4.1 Results from students

4.1.1 Results from the whole group of students

This section presents the general attitudes of the whole group of students towards their teachers' humour usage as well as their perceptions of the role of humour in language classes in general.

4.1.1.1 Students' perceptions of their teachers' use of humour

In this section, results gained from the whole group of students about their perceptions of as well as attitudes towards their teachers' employment of humour in the language classroom will be presented.

Table 4.1. Humour is an important characteristic in a teacher

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
11	10.6	14	13.5	11	10.6	28	26.9	22	21.2	18	17.3	104	100

Table 4.1 reveals students' opinions about humour as an important feature of a teacher. The table shows that the majority of students in the study considered humour as a teacher's crucial characteristic: 28 students partly agreed, 22 students agreed and 18 students strongly agreed with the statement. Such figures make up for a percentage of 65.4 %, which means a humorous teacher seems to be a preference for most students. The rest of the students, accounting for 34.6%, expressed the opposite ideas, either as strongly agree, disagree or partly disagree. No patterns were evident in who the disagreeing participants were (19 males vs. 26 females and 22 Chinese vs. 23 non-Chinese).

Table 4.2. My teacher often uses humour in English language teaching

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	1	4	3.8	7	6.7	21	20.2	48	46.2	23	22.1	104	100

As regards teachers' frequency of using humour in their teaching, 92 students (88.5%) acknowledged their teachers' attempts at incorporating humour in the lessons, as indicated in table 4.2. There were only 12 respondents (11.5%) showing their disagreement with the statement that their teachers often use humour in the English language lessons.

Table 4.3. My teacher's use of humour is relevant to the lesson

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	0	6	5.8	4	3.8	24	23.1	46	44.2	24	23.1	104	100

The information in table 4.3 shows the extent of relevance that the students perceived in their teachers' employment of humour. As can be seen, very few students thought that the humour that their teachers used during their teaching was irrelevant to the lesson (10 students), whereas most of them, 94 students – which accounts for 90.4% - expressed the other sides: 23.1 % (24 students) partly agreed, 44.2 % (46 students) agreed and 23.1 % (24 students) strongly agreed. Such a significant figure might suggest that relevance to the lesson is something all the teachers in this study value and affects their choice of humour types to use.

Table 4.4. My teacher's use of humour increases my interest in learning

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	0	0	0	1	1	10	9.6	44	42.3	49	47.1	104	100

This statement was set out with a view to measuring how much interest the students get when their teachers use humour in the lesson. Interesting results were gained: 103 students (99%) acknowledged that their interest in learning the language was increased with the engagement of some humour by their teachers: 10 students partly agreed, 44 students agreed and 49 of them strongly agreed. There was only 1 student not thinking in the same way, which could mean this student does not value humour, or that his/her interest in learning is at a maximum level already.

Table 4.5. I always understand my teacher's humour

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2	2	8	7.6	21	20.2	27	26	40	38.4	6	5.8	104	100

There were 73 students (70.2 %) assuming that their teachers' employment of humour was always understandable. This indicates that the majority of teachers' humour attempts were appropriate and suitable for the students' level, or if the students were not understanding them correctly, they were unaware of this fact. The rest of the students, which accounts for 29.8 % (31 students), did not have the same opinion: most of them (21 students) slightly disagreed, 8 students disagreed and there were 2 respondents strongly disagreeing.

Table 4.6. My teacher's use of humour makes him/her closer to me

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	0	0	0	3	2.9	13	12.5	57	54.8	31	29.8	104	100

On being asked about the rapport built between the teachers and students when humour is engaged as an integral part in the lesson, 97.1 % of the students expressed their agreement with the idea that humour made their teachers more approachable to them. Among these, 13 students partly agreed, 57 agreed and 31 strongly agreed. On the opposite side, the number was not significant: only 3 participants slightly disagreed with such statement.

4.1.1.2 Students' perceptions of the role of humour in language learning

This section reveals the results obtained with regard to the students' perceptions of the role of humour in language teaching in general.

Table 4.7. Humour makes me feel more relaxed (*i.e.* less anxious) in the language classroom

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	1	5	4.8	10	9.6	28	26.9	36	34.6	24	23.1	104	100

In this table, information about the psychological benefit of humour is mentioned. Literature has indicated that one of the psychological benefits of humour is to relax students (for examples, Korobkin, 1988; Neuliep, 1991; Deiter, 2000; Askildon, 2005; Garner, 2006). Results gained from the student participants in the present study confirmed such finding: 84.6 % of the respondents (88 students) acknowledged that they felt more relaxed when their teachers used humour in the lesson (28 students partly agreed, 36 agreed and 24 of them strongly agreed). There were a total of 16 opposing responses (15.4 %).

Table 4.8. Humour in the language classroom makes me learn the language better

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	1	6	5.8	6	5.8	19	18.2	44	42.3	28	26.9	104	100

Table 4.8 reveals information about the cognitive benefit of humour. Asked whether humour is of any help in making students learn better, 87.4 % of the responses collected from the survey expressed agreement: most of them (42.3 %) said that they agreed, 26.9 % strongly agreed and 18.2 % partly agreed. On the other side, 12.6% of the students disagreed with this assumption: 1 student strongly disagreed, 6 disagreed and another 6 slightly disagreed.

Table 4.9. Humour in the language classroom helps me concentrate more on the lesson

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
5	4.8	9	8.6	6	5.8	27	26	39	37.5	18	17.3	104	100

One may be of the opinion that humour incorporation in the classroom would distract students' attention rather than help them concentrate. Taking this assumption into consideration, the researcher used the statement "Humour in the language classroom helps me concentrate more on the lesson" to see what the students in this study may think. Different answers were obtained, ranging from both sides: agreement and disagreement. However, as can be seen from table 4.9, such discrepancies were not even. In other words, more students agreed with the statement than those disagreed. The result shown in the figures was that 80.8 % (84 students) expressed their agreement compared with 19.2 % of disagreement (20 students).

Table 4.10. Humour can increase my understanding at difficult points

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2	2	5	4.8	22	21.2	39	37.5	21	20.1	15	14.4	104	100

In order to see the relationship between teachers' use of humour and students' understanding at some difficult points of the lesson, the researcher wanted to know the extent of agreement that the respondents held with her supposed idea that humour would increase understanding. The result gained was that most students agreed rather than disagreed with the prediction: 75 students (72 %) showed their agreement whereas 29 of them (28 %) were on the opposite side.

Table 4.11. Humour improves my ability to learn a language by creating a more comfortable and helpful learning environment

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	0	4	3.8	14	13.4	18	17.3	33	31.8	35	33.7	104	100

The figures in table 4.11 shows further information about the impact of humour on students' language learning ability, with regard to the classroom environment. According to the students' responses, a total of 86 students (82.8 %) stated that humour would improve their capability to learn a language (most of them strongly agreed and agreed, some partly agreed), whereas the other 18 respondents (17.2 %) did not share the same idea: 14 of them slightly disagreed and there were only 4 disagreeing.

Table 4.12. I would like my teacher to use humour in the language class regularly

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
5	4.8	10	9.6	24	23.1	22	21.2	29	27.9	14	13.4	104	100

The statement “I would like my teacher to use humour in the language class regularly” was included in the questionnaire to double-check students’ opinions about humour as an important part of a teacher’s characteristic as well as an integral part of a language lesson. Similar result was gained, in comparison with the above assumptions about the relationship between humour and language learning: 62.5 % of the students expressed their preference for their teachers’ regular engagement of humour in the language classroom. There existed certain opposing ideas: the remaining 37.5 % did not think in the same way, of these there were 5 students strongly disagreeing, 10 disagreeing and 24 slightly disagreeing.

Table 4.13. The use of humour is important in language learning

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	0	0	0	6	5.8	20	19.2	43	41.3	35	33.7	104	100

Information from table 4.13 reveals the overall point of view of the students on the role of humour in language teaching and learning in general. Results obtained show that most of the students in this study considered humour an important factor in language teaching and learning: 33.7 % of responses were indicated as strongly agree, 41.3 % as agree and 19.2 % as partly agree. A very small number of the respondents (5.8 %) slightly disagreed with the statement.

To summarize, this section revealed the results obtained from the whole group of students on their teachers' use of humour in the lessons as well as their perceptions of the role of humour in language teaching and learning in general.

Comparisons between different groups of students regarding gender and nationality will be presented in the next section.

4.1.2 Humour perceptions in relationship with gender and nationality

An independent t-test was conducted to compare the students' attitude towards their teachers' use of humour and their perceptions of the role of humour in language learning for males versus females, and Chinese versus non-Chinese. The first part of this section shows the results for gender, and the second part reveals the results for nationality.

4.1.2.1 Gender and humour

4.1.2.1.1 Students' attitudes towards their teachers' use of humour

Results gained from the independent t-test on students' attitudes towards their teachers' employment of humour in the language classroom are summarized in table 4.14 below.

Table 4.14. Table of Means: Students' Attitudes towards their Teachers' Use of Humour *(Gender)*

Item No.	Statements	Males (N = 44)		Females (N = 60)		p.value
		Mean (M)	SD	Mean (M)	SD	
1.	Humour is an important characteristic in a teacher.	3.4	1.5	4.2	1.5	.01*
2.	My teacher often uses humour in English language teaching.	4.5	1.1	4.9	1.0	.13
3.	My teacher's use of humour is relevant to the lesson.	4.6	1.1	4.9	1.0	.25
4.	My teacher's use of humour increases my interests in learning.	5.2	.70	5.5	.7	.06
5.	I always understand my teacher's humour.	4.1	1.1	4.1	1.1	.89
6.	My teacher's use of humour makes him/her closer to me.	5.3	.9	5.0	.6	.13
7.	I would like my teacher to use humour in the language class regularly.	3.8	1.5	4.1	1.3	.30
	Overall Mean Score	**4.4**	**1.1**	**4.7**	**1.0**	

Note: Item marked with an asterisk show significant difference.
(1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Partly disagree, 4=Partly agree, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree)

On average, females (*N* = 60, *M*= 4.7, *SD*= 1.0) tended to agree with the statements concerning their teachers' use of humour in the lessons more than males (*N* = 44, *M* = 4.4, *SD* = 1.1) did. However, except for item no.1, such difference was not significant (p > .05). The two groups of respondents indicated the difference in their perceptions of humour as an important feature of a teacher (p = .01). Accordingly, females (*M* = 4.2) showed more agreement with the statement than males (*M* = 3.4).

4.1.2.1.2 Students' perceptions of the role of humour in language learning

Table 4.15 below shows the results from the independent t-test on students' perceptions of the roles of humour in the language classroom.

Table 4.15. Table of Means: Students' Perceptions of the Role of Humour in Language Learning*(Gender)*

Item No.	Statements	Males (N = 44)		Females (N = 60)		p.value
		Mean (M)	SD	Mean (M)	SD	
8.	Humour makes me feels more relaxed (less anxious) in the language classroom.	4.5	1.2	4.7	1.1	.32
9.	Humour in the language classroom makes me learn the language better.	4.5	1.3	4.9	.9	.12
10.	Humour in the language classroom helps me concentrate more on the lesson.	4.0	1.3	4.6	1.4	.05*
11.	Humour can increase my understanding at difficult points.	4.1	1.2	4.1	1.2	.93
12.	Humour improves my ability to learn a language by creating a more comfortable and helpful learning environment.	4.5	1.3	5.0	1.0	.02*
13.	The use of humour is important in language learning.	5.0	1.0	5.1	.8	.62
	Overall Mean Score	**4.4**	**1.2**	**4.7**	**1.1**	

Note: Items marked with an asterisk show significant differences.
(1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Partly disagree, 4=Partly agree, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree)

The overall mean score in table 4.14 (*M* = 4.4 for males and *M* = 4.7 for females) reveals that regardless of gender, the students in this study agreed with the positive influences of humour on their learning and all considered the use of humour in language learning as being important. Nevertheless, on mentioning humour as a concentration-enhancing factor (item no.10)and learning ability-improving factor (item no.12), these two groups of students differed significantly: females expressed stronger level of agreement with the assumptions that their teachers' humour helped them concentrate more on the lesson (*M* = 4.6 and *M* = 4.0 for males, *p*= .05), and such humour improved their ability to learn a language by creating a more comfortable and helpful learning environment (*M* = 5.0 for females and *M* = 4.5 for males, *p*< .05)

4.1.2.2 Nationality and humour

4.1.2.2.1 Students' attitudes towards their teachers' use of humour

The t-test results on the attitudes of students from different backgrounds towards their teachers' employment of humour in the language classroom are presented in table 4.16. As discussed in chapter 3, the range of nationalities was very unevenly spread, and under these circumstances it was decided that, despite its limitations, the Chinese/non-Chinese division was the most meaningful to explore.

Table 4.16. Table of Means: Students' Attitudes towards their Teachers' Use of Humour *(Nationality)*

Item No.	Statements	Chinese (N = 71)		Non-Chinese (N = 33)		p.value
		Mean (M)	SD	Mean (M)	SD	
1.	Humour is an important characteristic in a teacher	3.4	1.6	3.9	1.6	.95
2.	My teacher often uses humour in English language teaching	4.7	1.0	4.8	1.1	.57
3.	My teacher's use of humour is relevant to the lesson	4.7	1.0	4.8	1.1	.65
4.	My teacher's use of humour increases my interests in learning	5.4	.7	5.3	.7	.82
5.	I always understand my teacher's humour	4.1	1.1	4.0	1.3	.60
6.	My teacher's use of humour makes him/her closer to me	5.0	.7	5.3	.8	.07
7.	I would like my teacher to use humour in the language class regularly	3.8	1.4	4.5	1.2	.02*
	Overall Mean Score	**4.4**	**1.1**	**4.7**	**1.1**	

Note: Item marked with an asterisk shows significant differences.
(1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Partly disagree, 4=Partly agree, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree)

As can be seen from table 4.16, on average, non-Chinese students (N = 33, M = 4.7, SD = 1.1) showed more positive attitudes towards their teachers' humour employment than Chinese students (N = 71, M = 4.4, SD = 1.1). Such deviation was not significant, except for item no.7 ($p < .05$). Results revealed that non-Chinese students (M = 4.5) preferred the regular humour incorporation into the lesson by their teachers rather than Chinese ones (M = 3.8).

4.1.2.2.2 Students' perceptions of the role of humour in language learning

Table 4.17 below indicates results on the two groups of nationalities' perceptions of the impact of humour on their learning.

Table 4.17. Table of Means: Students' perceptions of the role of humour in language learning *(Nationality)*

Item No.	Statements	Chinese (N = 71)		Non-Chinese (N = 33)		p.value
		Mean (M)	SD	Mean (M)	SD	
8.	Humour makes me feels more relaxed (less anxious) in the language classroom.	4.2	1.1	5.4	.6	.00*
9.	Humour in the language classroom makes me learn the language better.	4.6	1.2	5.1	.9	.04*
10.	Humour in the language classroom helps me concentrate more on the lesson.	4.2	1.4	4.6	1.1	.18
11.	Humour can increase my understanding at difficult points.	4.1	1.2	4.2	1.1	.61
12.	Humour improves my ability to learn a language by creating a more comfortable and helpful learning environment.	4.6	1.3	5.2	.7	.00*
13.	The use of humour is important in language learning.	4.9	.9	5.2	.7	.09
	Overall Mean Score	**4.4**	**1.2**	**5.0**	**0.9**	

Note: Items marked with an asterisk show significant differences.
(1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Partly disagree, 4=Partly agree, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree)

Interestingly, no group of students showed any disagreement with any items in the table, which would mean that there was consistency between Chinese (N = 71, M = 4.4, SD = 1.2) and non-Chinese (N = 33, M = 5.0, SD = 0.9) students on the humour-learning relationship. The significant differences lay in the items no.1, no.2 and no.5. The overall mean scores of these three items for Chinese is 4.5, whereas that of non-Chinese is 5.2. These statistics could be understood that, although both groups were in agreement with each other on the role of humour in relaxing students, helping them learn better and improving their language learning ability, non-Chinese students showed stronger agreement compared with Chinese ones. Such findings seemed to be consistent with these two groups of students' attitudes towards their teachers' humour use as presented above: non-Chinese students showed more agreement with the roles of humour on their learning, thus, they would like more regular use of humour in the lessons by their teachers. Possible explanations for these findings are explored in chapter 5.

The next part of this chapter shows the results achieved from the class observations and teacher interviews with the researcher.

4.2 Results from teachers

4.2.1 Results from observations

There were a total of 7 teachers observed with more than 22 hours of data (break-time excluded). The reports below gained from the researcher's field notes of observed lessons as well as the transcript of the teachers' voice during their lessons.

As mentioned in chapter 3, results obtained after the content analysis of the humour incidences by the teacher participants revealed that the teachers in this study employed a wide range of different examples of humour for different purposes (See Appendix 4), either related or unrelated to the materials being taught, and such humour could be directed at either the students or themselves. The vast number of humour attempts obtained also indicated that all the teachers in this study made every effort to use humour during their lessons, despite the fact that there were still differences regarding the frequency and types of humour by each teacher. Humour was applied throughout the lessons, not at any specific stages. It was employed at the beginning of the classes as "ice-breakers", in the middle of the lessons as "attention-getter" or at the end to re-energise students after a long learning period. Humour was used in the lessons as a part of a natural projection of the of teachers' personality, none of them seemed to want to create the impression of being a "serious professor" and all forms of humour were applied in a natural way. The type of English course did seem to affect the amount of humour used in the lessons: in the classes observed, more humour and laughter could be found in general English classes than in academic ones.

The specific humour attempts by each teacher as well as the context in which they were used will be presented in the tables below. It is worth noting that for most types of humour, either employed by one teacher only or by several teachers, more than one example could be found; however, in the following tables, only one or two typical examples and their respective contexts will be presented. For the full dataset of the teachers' incidences of humour and their contexts, see also Appendix 4 for detailed examples.

4.2.1.1 Related humour

Table 4.18 below shows the teachers' examples of humour which were related to the teaching materials.

Table 4.18: Related Humour

Item No.	Types of humour	Examples	Context	Teachers employed
1.	The teacher tells a humorous story related to the lesson being taught.	One teacher told a humorous but true story about the fact that many Chinese tourists bought boxes of milk when going to the shopping centre, and the Australian government had to limit the number of milk boxes each person could buy each time.[5]	*Pre-writing activity*: The students were required to read a text about the transnational companies. A part of the reading text mentioned toxic substances in milk products made in China.	***Teacher 5*** ***Teacher 7***
2.	The teacher uses funny examples to illustrate the materials being taught.	- I have been standing here for 30 seconds - I have been sitting here for 5 seconds	Funny examples to explain the use of the present perfect continuous (for long duration of time)	***Teacher 1*** ***Teacher 3***
3.	The teacher uses games/ student	*Guessing words:*	Revising vocabulary	***Teacher 1***

[5]This story seemed very risky humour. However, the teacher later explained that in their previous outdoor activities together, they had already mentioned this issue.

	role-play activities related to the teaching materials.	Two representatives from 2 groups stood facing their classmates. The teacher showed the word on the screen; their classmates used body language or explain the meanings of the words for the 2 representatives to call out the words.	before writing	***Teacher 3*** ***Teacher 2***
4.	The teacher performs and/or acts out course material to illustrate concepts.	- The teacher opened his eyes wide, looking directly at the students (new word: *eye-opening*) - The teacher mimed and used body language to explain the meaning of the word *obesity*.	Teaching vocabulary	***Teacher 1*** ***Teacher 2*** ***Teacher 4***
5.	The teacher uses media/ external objects to illustrate the materials.	- On teaching words with similar meanings but conveying	Teaching vocabulary	***Teacher 1*** ***Teacher***

		different feelings (e.g., gaunt – thin – athletic), the teacher drew funny icons to illustrate.		***4*** ***Teacher 7***
6.	The teacher gives instructions/ requirement/ introduction in a humorous way.	"If I have nothing to say, I'll try to disappear". (raising her voice & using facial expression when saying) "Now, let's move to the sexy grammar".	The teacher encouraged the students to take turn to give their ideas in group work discussion. The teacher introduced the grammar section.	***Teacher 1*** ***Teacher 2*** ***Teacher 4*** ***Teacher 5*** ***Teacher 6***
7.	The teacher uses humorous comments students' performances.	"Rubbish words will get rubbish marks"	The teacher encouraged the students to use academic words in academic writing	***Teacher 3***
8.	The teacher raises impossible-to-answer questions related to the materials being taught.	The reading text is a story about a couple, including the picture of their photo. The teacher asked the students:	Pre-reading activity	***Teacher 4*** ***Teacher 2***

		"Who are they?" After the students discussed a few minutes and had no answer, the T replied "I don't know, either. They are people".		
9.	The teacher invents humorous things about the students' characteristics and uses them as examples to illustrate the concepts.	"--- (a student's name) came to my house and stole things.He's a burglar" (new word: *burglar*) - ---- (a boy's name) is unaccustomed to going out with girls (new word: *unaccustomed*)	Eliciting the meanings of new words	***Teacher 1*** ***Teacher 2***

As can be seen, related humour was used by all the teachers and throughout the lesson. This type of humour could be used to give instructions to a task, to lead to the new lesson, to illustrate the learning materials, or to give feedback on students' performances.

4.2.1.2 Unrelated humour

The teachers' humour which was not related to learning material or classroom enhancement was labelled as "unrelated humour". This category of humour types was common among all the teachers in this study.

Table 4.19 reveals the examples and context of unrelated humour by the teachers observed.

Table 4.19: Unrelated Humour

Item No.	Types of humour	Examples	Context	Teachers employed
10.	The teacher makes a humorous comment which is not related to the course content.	"That never happens: The boys never beat the girls".	Give comments on students' performances.	***Teacher 1*** ***Teacher 2*** ***Teacher 5*** ***Teacher 4*** ***Teacher 7***
11.	The teacher uses games/ student role-play activities not related to the course content.	*Running dictation:* A short story was stuck on the wall right outside the classroom. Students worked in their group: one	Motivating the classroom atmosphere	***Teacher 1*** ***Teacher 2*** ***Teacher 7***

		secretary being responsible for rewriting the story, the other members took turn to run, read one sentence each time, ran back to the class and read to the secretary to write down. The winners were those who finished the story first with fewest mistakes.		
12.	The teacher asks the students to do a funny physical activity.	The teacher asked all the students, including both males and females to make a human pyramid	Encouraging solidarity and cooperation spirit in pair work and group work	***Teacher 1***
13.	The teacher raises impossible-to-answer questions not related to the course content.	The teacher raised the question: "What is the most special thing about Switzerland?". After the students discussed a few minutes and had no answer, the T replied	Warm-up activity	***Teacher 3***

		"I don't know, either.		
14.	The teacher uses critical or cynical humour to notify students of their inappropriate behaviours.	"Good afternoon or Good evening"! "I'm the best dictionary in this room"	1 student came to class late – the class was in morning session. 1 student used mobile during the lesson, on being asked what he was using it for, the student replied "to look up new word".	***Teacher1*** ***Teacher 3*** ***Teacher 4*** ***Teacher 5*** ***Teacher 6*** ***Teacher 7***
15.	The teacher tells a funny story which is not related to the course content.	The teacher told a funny story about a naughty boy becoming good after falling in love with a girl.	Motivating the class atmosphere before moving to the new activity.	***Teacher 2*** ***Teacher 1***
16.	The teacher replies to students' questions in a funny way.	When the students called her name, the teacher replied "Yes, sir/madam".	During the class activities	***Teacher 4*** ***Teacher 1***
17.	The teacher uses humour attempts which are not related to class material and involves some type of animated performance.	One teacher put the cloth and markers into her trouser pockets and went around the class.	During the class activities	***Teacher1*** ***Teacher 4*** ***Teacher 6***

Like related humour, the unrelated category was used at different stages of the lessons. Different examples were employed mostly to motivate the classroom atmosphere between activities as confirmed later by the teachers, to notify the students of their inappropriate behaviour, to give comments on students' performances, or as warm-up activities. Among these types of humour, the human pyramid was probably one of the most interesting humour incidents: all the students seemed really excited and a lot of laughter was observed.

4.2.1.3 Other-directed humour

All the teachers' humour which was directed at the students was classified as other-directed humour in the present study.

Table 4.20: Other-directed Humour

Item No.	Types of humour	Examples	Context	Teachers employed
18.	The teacher teases or makes fun of an individual student in class in a light-hearted way.	"A good mistake"	One student gave a wrong answer.	***Teacher 2*** ***Teacher 4*** ***Teacher 5*** ***Teacher 7*** ***Teacher 6***

19.	The teacher teases the students about their personal belongings.	The teacher teased a female student about her shoes.	Motivating the class atmosphere between activities	***Teacher 1***
20.	The teacher invents humorous things about the students' characteristics not related to the course content.	"He is gay, I know, he doesn't know what to say".[6]	Motivating the class atmosphere between activities	***Teacher 1*** ***Teacher 4***
21.	The teacher uses humour which is not related to the course content and is directed the class as a whole.	[7] "What do you call a deer with no eyes"? (The answer: *no idea*). "What do you call a deer with no eyes and no legs?" (The answer: *still no idea*)	The teacher elicited ideas from the class but the students kept silent.	***Teacher 3*** ***Teacher 7*** ***Teacher 1***
22.	The teacher comments on a student's intelligence in a humorous way.	Be careful! He is very intelligent.	Motivating the class atmosphere between activities	***Teacher 1***

[6]In fact, this student is not gay and is rarely lost for words. Instead, he is very creative, intelligent and he took part in activities actively.

[7]These examples are riddles/ word-play. However, in this case, the teacher aimed to tease the class for not giving ideas.

In most cases, the teachers employed these humour categories to relax and enhance the classroom atmosphere after hard time of practice or between activities. Some examples were of help in explaining the materials being taught or giving feedback on the students' wrong answers in a soft way.

4.2.1.4 Self-directed humour

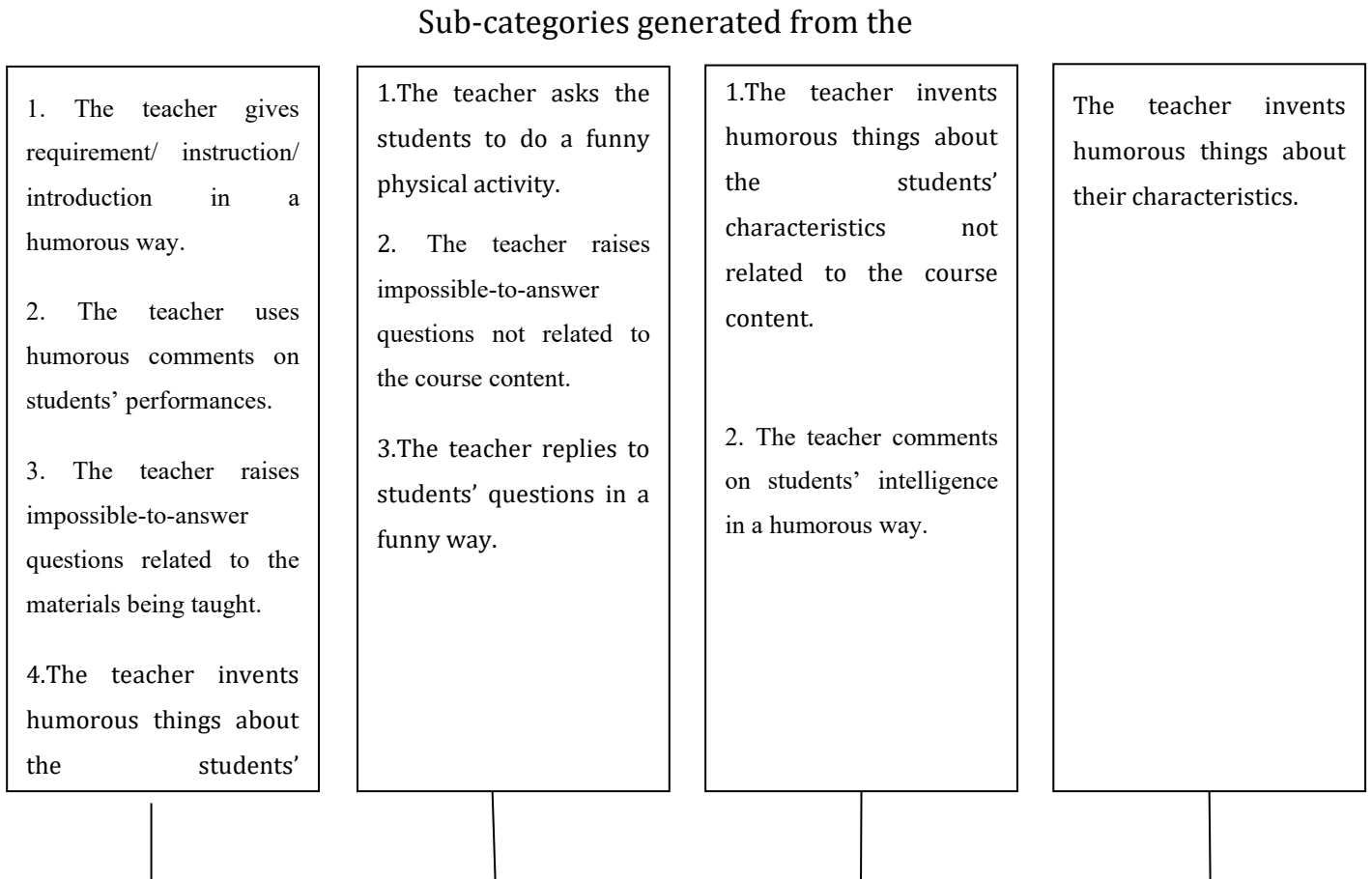
Self-directed humour included the humour attempts which were directed at the teachers. Such types of humour were not common among the teachers in this study: three teachers employed this category for the purpose of motivating the classroom. The examples and context of self-directed humour are shown in table 4.21 below.

Table 4.21: Self-directed Humour

Item No.	Types of humour	Examples	Context	Teachers employed
23.	The teacher makes fun of himself/ herself in the class.	"I'm old, I'm bald, I'm short. I'm very ugly" (the teacher used facial expression when saying). "--- (teacher's name) is super stupid.	The teacher used humour at the beginning of the class as "ice-breakers".	***Teacher 1*** ***Teacher 6***
24.	The teacher tells humorous stories about his/ her personal life.	The teacher told a funny story about his past experiences: "When I was young, I was very bad, I always caused troubles, and my teachers used to let me stand outside the classroom for hours"	Motivating the class atmosphere between activities	***Teacher 1***
25.	The teacher invents humorous things about their characteristics.	The teacher introduced herself "I'm a super star. I'm going to be famous".	Warm-up the classroom atmosphere before the lesson.	***Teacher 5***

As can be seen, except for the self-directed category, the other three categories of humour were commonly used by all the teacher participants, some teachers shared the same types of humour subcategories, however, some of which seemed to be unique (e.g., the human pyramid) to a particular teacher.

Also, among the 25 subcategories of humour, there were a total of 10 new ones emerging from this study. The figure below summarises the new subcategories and how they relate to the superordinate categories.



Superordinate categories generated from the data and

Figure 4.1. New emerging subcategories of humour

The next section reports results from interviews, in which teachers shared their own views on the role of humour in general, on how to use humour effectively as well as explained their decisions with regards to their use of humour, such as their preferred humour types or the frequency of their using humour in a lesson.

4.2.2 Results from interviews

In this section, teachers' responses are analysed in order to show the similarities as well as discrepancies present in their opinions with regard to the themes mentioned in the interview. One instance of the teachers' responses will be given as illustration for each theme. For the extract of all teachers' responses, see also Appendix 5.

4.2.2.1 Teachers' thoughts of the roles of humour in language teaching

In general, all the teachers were of the view that the use of humour in language teaching would likely bring about more benefits rather than disadvantages. The majority of them emphasized that when used appropriately, sparingly and respectfully, humour was a really important factor in language teaching:

> 'In general, I think it's very important in all leaning'. (T7)

The other teachers assumed its possible effectiveness if a little humour could be engaged into the lesson:

> 'It can be effective, you know, when you make a joke after you have done something really hard, it will get students ready for the next one'. (T5)

The most common positive impact of teacher's use of humour, according to the teachers, was that it could make students feel comfortable and interested, and the classroom atmosphere friendlier and more relaxing. Six teachers mentioned this in their responses:

> 'You could use when possible, it would be great. It helps students to relax'. (T2)

When the atmosphere is relaxing, the students may "feel safe" (T4) and "build confidence as well" (T4); hence, they will be willing to ask questions, to participate in different activities without worrying about making mistakes:

> 'You know, if you want to learn things, you have to be able to ask questions, you have to be able to make mistakes and be accepted'. (T1)

Creating the connection, the rapport between the teacher and students was the second most frequently mentioned effective role of humour in language classrooms. It was possibly because by humour, students could "see the teacher as a normal human being" (T2):

> 'I think if people can see that you have got a sense of humour, it makes you, the teacher, more approachable'. (T3)

Other teachers also mentioned motivating students as a positive benefit of humour:

> 'Humour is a very good way of motivating them, relaxing them, so it's really important'. (T6)

In addition, teachers' use of humour played quite important role for class management purpose:

> 'I think humour is an effective way to make the class go smoothly and you can control the class better'. (T7)

Managing the class by means of humour could be of great help when teachers have to deal with students' wrong behaviour in the class:

> 'I think it can help to avoid a lot of problems, too. I use humour when I see students doing something that they shouldn't be doing'. (T7)

One significant thing which is worth noting here is the relationship between teachers' use of humour and students' learning. In the teachers' opinions, humour is a good way to help students remember the lessons better (T1 and T7), understand the language points more (T1), become more creative (T2) as well as keep students paying attention (T1 and T5):

> 'So I think, when they remember the jokes, remember something funny that has happened, they can remember the language points'. (T7)

There was even one teacher assuming that humour played an important role in helping teachers themselves overcome pressure in teaching:

> 'I think sometimes we, teachers, get more stressed because we know what we have to get through, if we forget the humour, we're going to be under pressure, too. So always try to use some humour in teaching'. (T3)

In summary, all the participants interviewed were in agreement with the effective roles of teachers' use of humour in language classrooms. Humour can be of great help, can be a useful weapon for teachers if it is used respectfully, carefully and appropriately.

4.2.2.2 The frequency of teachers' using humour in teaching

Most teachers said that they would use humour in every lesson and humour was an integral part of their teaching styles:

> I use humour all the time. I mean I dare not turn the class into a circus, […] but I think it can certainly relax students. (T7)

These teachers' responses seemed to coincide with what they had done in the lessons that the researcher had observed. A great amount of humour was engaged during their teaching procedures and the classroom atmosphere was quite relaxing (see 4.2.1).

The other teachers mentioned the types of students, students' levels as well as what was going on in the class as the important factors that affected their uses of humour in teaching:

> It depends on what's going on, it depends on activities […], I might joke about something. (T5)

In general, despite the difference in terms of the frequency of using humour, all the 7 teachers expressed agreement that some humour should be deployed in the language classrooms during their teaching.

4.2.2.3 Prepared or spontaneous humour

Four teachers said that they preferred spontaneous humour rather than prepared, therefore; their use of humour during their teaching was always incidental. Of these, one teacher (T1) mentioned his ability to use humour as an extremely well-trained presenter for a long time and recommended the others not to go in non-prepared to get better results. One emphasized the importance of "natural humour" though sometimes she thought that it was "dangerous" (T6). The other two teachers (T2and T5) assumed that their character in the class was consistent with their real life personality:

> It happens incidentally […]. Because when I do it, I just do it spontaneously, I don't prepare it. (T2)

The other teachers claimed that they used both spontaneous and prepared humour. The explanation for their choices was that some of the jokes they had been used before (T3 and T7), some occurred during the preparation of the lesson plans (T4), and for some certain forms of humour such as funny pictures, postcards or videos, they had to prepare in advance (T3 and T7):

> Sometimes it's incidental, sometimes it happens when I prepare my lessons. So it depends on the topic, depends much on the students. (T4)

4.2.2.4 Teachers' preferred types of humour

As most teachers mentioned in their interviews with the researcher, the use of humour was like a part of their personality. Therefore, it is not surprising that there were great variations among teachers' preferred types of humour which they normally used in their teaching.

The most preferred type of humour used by all the teachers was humorous comment (i.e. *the teacher makes a humorous comment*). The teachers used humorous comments mostly in class interaction, when giving feedback or correction on students' answers or when encouraging students to participate in class activities:

> I do that [use humorous comments] most of the time, and it's also related to what's going on in the class room. (T5)

Humorous comments were closely followed by teachers' performances or actions, which these teachers called *physical humour*. According to the teachers, most physical humour appeared in the forms of miming, body language and facial

expressions. Respondents also claimed that this type of humour was very strong in helping students remember language points and vocabulary as well as enabling them to understand instructions or rules in a relaxing way:

> I often use physical humour because they [students] can see exactly what we're doing in communication. (T2)

The use of jokes appeared at the third place. However, the choice of jokes to use in the class was also important and should be carefully taken into consideration. Most of them thought that jokes should not be too language-based; instead, they should be simple and understandable for students:

> You almost have to be close to native to understand a joke in another language because most jokes rely on the play with language. [...]. The joke I chose for the class was mostly physical, you didn't need language to understand that joke. (T1)

Only two teachers (T3 and T6) would choose slightly more complicated jokes like words with double meanings or games with words, assuming that their students' level of English was quite good and they would not have any difficulty in understanding their teachers' jokes:

> Sometimes I tell them jokes with words. (T3)

Besides having these types of humour in common, some teachers have their own ways to motivate the students during the lessons. T1's typical type is self-directed humour and other-directed humour, most humour is about himself, some about the students who he knows very well. He even makes up some funny things about his students' characteristics or interests, which he is sure that does not offend those students at all. T3 occasionally uses funny pictures or drawings to show to her students as a way of amusing them. T5, whose common choice of humour is verbal rather than physical one, would normally use relevant short funny stories as a useful device in her teaching:

> I think a lot of humour is personal. Finding out something about the students and using that. [...]. And if you don't have personal things, make it up. (T1)

4.2.2.5 Inappropriate humour in the class

Even though all teachers agreed on the effectiveness of humour in language teaching, they highlighted that it should be used very carefully, respectfully and appropriately.

The majority of teachers claimed that any types of humour that made fun of students, embarrassed students, made students feel attacked, uncomfortable and offended should be avoided. The explanation was that no one wanted to be laughed at, or "laugh with me, don't laugh at me" (T1):

> As I said, I used it to make students feel more comfortable, so if it's the topic or some types of situations that make them feel attacked or less comfortable, I absolutely don't use. (T4)

Other inappropriate types of humour that the teachers should take into consideration included "impolite humour" (T2), "sensitive humour" (T3) – specifically humour about politics or gender, jokes about cultures (T4 and T6) and "cruel humour"(T6)– namely humour about disability or appearance:

> I think you have to be somewhat sensitive to some kinds of humour such as political humour [...]. And you also need to be careful about gender. (T3)

What seems to be apparent from such responses is that although humour has certain advantages, teachers should use it responsibly and deliberately.

4.2.2.6 Types of lessons and effects on teachers' use of humour

Two teachers were of the opinion that they were able to use humour for every level of students and in every type of lesson. Humour could be used by them as an integral part during their teaching process:

> We can use humour for every kind of lesson. [...]. I find it hard to talk about humour in a lesson as being something separate. (T1)

Others assumed that to some extent, teachers' use of humour depended on the types of lesson; however, they could still use whenever possible:

> It probably does depend a little bit more on the types of the lessons, but hopefully we can, through some forms of humour, keep the situation some more enjoyable. It's a little bit hard but I have always tried to use some forms of humour in the classroom. (T3)

T2 and T5 shared similar ideas that it was the students in the class that had great influences on teachers' use of humour rather than the types of lessons. In their opinion, they could apply it in their teaching, depending on the students:

> I think it much depends on the people in the room. I can't think of any specific situation that I wouldn't use humour. So we can apply it, depending on the students. (T2)

4.2.2.7 Summary of Interviews

The teachers' responses during their interviews with the researcher revealed that all of them thought that engaging some humour in teaching would probably be more beneficial than unconducive to language learning. They mentioned such positive effects of humour as relaxing and motivating students, keeping students paying attention, breaking the "gap" between

teachers and students, helping students remember the language points and managing the class better. Humour was also of great help in helping students be more creative, build more confidence and feel safe. Teachers' use of humour was effective in notifying students of their inappropriate behaviour in the class and prevented teachers from getting too much pressure as well.

However, these teachers also warned against the use of too much humour, which might distract students from their studying. They claimed that some certain types of humour should be avoided in the classrooms so as not to cause misunderstanding or make students feel offended. Such humour types included cruel humour, impolite or sensitive humour, humour about cultural backgrounds and any forms of humour that would likely result in negative reactions from students.

The majority of the teachers interviewed claimed that the types of lesson, to some extent, might have impact on the amount of humour used in their teaching process. Nevertheless, they asserted that they had always tried to add some forms of humour in their teaching so that best learning results could be achieved by the students.

The practices regarding humour that teachers conducted as well as the opinions that they shared, along with results from student surveys, will form the basis for the discussion in the next chapter.

5 CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of key research findings presented in the previous chapters with reference to each of the research questions. The results of the study are also discussed in the light of existing literature about the use of humour in teaching in general, and in foreign language teaching in particular.

5.1 To what extent do EFL teachers use humour in adult multicultural classroom?

The students' responses, the class observations and the teacher interviews contributed to answering this research question. Three different data sources are of help in validating the results achieved.

The results reveal that the employment of humour in teaching EFL is prevalent among the teacher participants in this study, despite the fact that these teachers' learners are from multicultural backgrounds. However, it should also be remembered here that these participants were those who volunteered to be a part of the present study, and in fact it may happen that the ones who use less or do not use humour would have been less likely to volunteer.

All the teacher participants made attempts to engage humour during their teaching in the observed lessons, and the frequency of such humour use was different depending on each individual. Teacher 1 had the highest number of successful attempts at employing humour during the lesson (sixty-six times) whereas the lowest number belonged to teacher 2 (nine times). Teacher 2 explained later in the interview that she did not have much experience in teaching and this group of students was at low level, thus, these factors affected her attempts at using humour in the lesson observed. There is not

enough evidence in this study to draw any conclusion about the impact of teaching experience and student levels on the frequency of teachers' humour use. However, Neuliep (1991) found that there was no relationship between teacher experience and frequency of humour use, and Senior's (2001) finding revealed that limited levels of English did not prove to be a barrier to humorous interaction in the classes. The possible explanation for T2's response may be the relationship between age and number of years teaching. This teacher participant (T2) is middle aged (above 42 years old), nevertheless, she has worked as a teacher for only 1 year. In practice, it is possible that younger teachers who have not been teaching for a long time may have different viewpoints on as well as practices of humour use in their teaching.

The mean number of humour incidences among the teachers in this study was 7.17 per hour per class session. This number was higher than the mean number of humour incidences per lecture found in Bryant et al.'s (1980) research. In their paper, the frequency of humour use per 50-minute class was 3.34. The frequency of humour attempts in this study was also higher than the "optimal dose" of humour suggested by Ziv (1988), which was three to four instances per hour and those in Neuliep's (1991) – with an average of 2.08 per teacher per class session. Surprising as it may seem, the mean number in the present study was almost identical to that found in Nguyen's (2014) research, which was 7.13 per 90-minute class session. Such discrepancies as well as similarity could be explained in a number of ways.

As noted before, one evident difference between this study and the previous research is the multicultural backgrounds of the student participants. Among the observed classes, there was only one class with students from two nationalities. The number of cultural backgrounds from the other six classes ranged from three to five per class. It was such a challenge for any language teacher working with these classes. The most common feature of any language class is that students work most of the time

through different pair work or group work activities. In order to achieve the desired learning results via such activities, it is crucial that language teachers build a cooperative and motivating classroom atmosphere where students work with each other with team spirit and solidarity. In a class with various nationalities, it can be harder to encourage such a spirit among students as a result of cultural "gaps". In this sense, humour seems to be a good solution as it could create "a positive emotional and social environment", serve as a link between teachers and students as well as among class members "by demonstrating a shared understanding and a common psychological bond" (Garner, 2006, p. 177) and decrease "social distance" (Gorham & Christophel, 1990, p. 47). This was employed and then confirmed by the teacher participants in this study that humour was a very quick way to be human and that it could bring people together.

In terms of the class sizes, the number of students per each class in the present study was quite small, with no more than nineteen students in a class. This number was even smaller than that of in Nguyen's (2014) study, which was no more than thirty students per class. In Bourke's (1986) point of view, smaller classes would mean fewer interactions between the teacher and students, fewer students' questioning, less teacher's lecturing, and more waiting for responses when teachers asked questions. This feature is common among foreign language classes. The small class size in this study was advantageous in the sense that it could increase the class interactions as well as enable teachers' attention to each student in the class. There were likely more interactions between teachers and students in this study compared with Bryant's (1980) and Ziv's (1988) research as their settings were college classes with up to hundreds of students in each lecture hall.

Another possible explanation for this higher number of humour incidences could be the nature of English as a foreign language classroom. Features of the research setting of the present study is similar to those in Nguyen's (2014) study, which

may be argued for the almost identical means of humour attempts by the teachers. Hammadou and Bernhardt (1987, p. 305) as cited in Borg (2006) stated that in foreign language classes, "the content and the process for learning the content are the same. In other words, in foreign language teaching the medium is the message". That is to say, in the present study, English was not only the teachers' instruction means but also the students' content to learn (Nguyen, 2014). Regarding the fact that the majority of teachers in this study emphasized the positive impact of humour on learning (See 4.2.2.1), their attempts at humour could be seen as a teaching device to enhance the students' learning process.

In conclusion, the results of this study revealed that all teacher participants made every effort to incorporate humour into their teaching, and the frequency of humour use in this group was higher than generally reported in the literature.

5.2 What types of humour do EFL teachers use in adult multicultural classrooms and in which context?

In this study, the types of humour employed by the teachers observed were varied, falling into four main categories: related, unrelated, other-directed and self-directed humour. Among them, some teachers shared the same humour forms; however, many of them had their own ways to create humour. Thus, this section will discuss the types of humour with regard to the frequency of their occurrence during observations as well as the teacher participants' responses in the subsequent interviews.

As most teachers referred to humour in teaching as a part of their personality, humorous comments (both related and unrelated to the material being taught) were the most commonly used, as this form of humour is normally spontaneous and would be consistent with the teachers' real life character. Interesting as it may seem, this form of humour was also the most preferred type among the teacher participants in Nguyen's (2014) study. This type of humour, in Gorham and Christophel's

(1990) point of view, was of help in increasing teachers' immediacy. In the present study, as was observed and then further explained by the teachers in the interview, humorous comments were employed at the points when such teachers attempted to relax the atmosphere and soften their criticisms on students' wrong behaviour or mistakes. Being spontaneous and for such purposes, humorous comments were employed throughout the lessons, not at any specific points.

However, it cannot be denied that humorous comments depend much on what is going on in the class (whether the situation is sufficiently funny to give comment or not), on individual student (whether he/she has positive attitude towards the humour use) and even on teachers' mood at that time. That is to say, although they were spontaneous, humorous comments still required much consideration as to whether or not they should be employed in the teachers' lessons. To date, literature has not reported much on the prevalence of humorous comments in teachers' employment of humour when teaching (Nguyen, 2014). However, in this study, such type of humour was chosen as the most popular preferred teaching device by all the teachers observed. The explanation for this preference could be that humour is a part of their real life character, as they mentioned, which suggests maybe that these teachers might feel they can be more natural and not have to put on a professional persona when teaching. Besides, it can also be argued that these teachers' relationship with the students was good enough for them to use this possibly risky humour type without worrying about causing any problems to their audience.

Teachers' performances or actions were chosen by the majority of teachers as one of their preferred humour types. There is common belief that "Actions speak louder than words", hence, the incorporation of this form of humour, such as body language, facial expression, voice tone, etc., seems to be a very strong teaching device for teachers in language lessons. Stevick (1976) as cited in Pennycook (1985, p. 271) claimed that in language classes, "people do not communicate by words alone"

and that such device like tone of voice, body language can carry "messages that either confirm the words, or are irrelevant to them, or contradict them". Chen & Watts (1992) shared similar points of view by stating that messages can be conveyed so often by our bodies that in some cases, we communicate even more than we realize. However, it is important to note here that, although literature has acknowledged the importance of incorporating body language into classroom activities, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the employment of teachers' performances as a form of humour has not been reported. Teachers' personalities as well as the rapport built with their students in this study, again, could be the best explanation for the regular occurrence of physical humour during their lesson delivery. Anyway, further research on the use of humour in the forms of humorous comments and teachers' performances in teaching would be of great help regarding the incorporation of humour in foreign language teaching and learning.

The use of word play, in this study in the form of jokes/ riddles, was the third most common use of humour. Jokes, together with humorous examples and stories, in Wanzer's (2002) opinion, can help students "recall the material" (p. 122). Her explanation for this is that if a student manages to recall the humour, he or she may manage to relive the material that their teacher illustrated. However, when encountering a joke or riddle, it is possible that the listener may or may not understand it. This is the result of the lack of knowledge either of language or of the world (Souza, 2008). In other words, certain knowledge of culture and language is required in order for a joke to be fully understood. Therefore, jokes should be carefully chosen if used in classroom setting, especially when the teacher and students do not share the same first language. Considering the fact that the students in the current study are from different countries with multiple cultural backgrounds, and at different levels (see 3.4.2), the attempts at jokes by teachers observed were not as popular as those in monolingual classrooms in the literature. As some teachers expressed in their interviews, jokes were advanced humour which were both culture-based and

language-based, therefore, not suitable for low-level students. Only those teachers working with advanced students (in this study, academic classes) made attempts to use complicated humour or jokes playing with words in their teaching, however, they also claimed that such humour was not their preferred type. On the other hand, in Bryant et al.'s (1979) and Neuliep's (1991) studies, jokes were among the most prevalent types of humour employed in the classrooms. That is to say, the use of jokes in particular and word play in general in foreign language classrooms requires thorough and careful preparation as well as consideration for them to be appropriately used.

To sum up, although teachers' choices of humour forms in this study were diverse, all of them came to an agreement that whatever type of humour they were going to use, they should take students' levels as well as cultures into consideration so that they could fully exploit the incorporation of humour in teaching and that such incorporation could enhance their teaching and their students' learning.

5.3 What are EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of the role[s] of humour in adult multicultural classrooms?

In general, all the teachers in this study were of the view that if carefully and appropriately employed, the incorporation of humour in language teaching would likely bring more benefits rather than disadvantages (See 4.2.2.1).

The most common conducive benefits of humour mentioned by teachers in the present study supported the findings by other researchers in the literature, both in L1 (Neuliep, 1991; Deiter, 2000; Garner, 2006 or Lei et al., 2010) and L2 classrooms (Askildon, 2005; Petraki& Nguyen, 2016). Such benefits included making students feel comfortable, relaxed and interested;

creating rapport between teachers and students; and motivating students in their study. The teachers also emphasized that these functions of humour were of great help in encouraging students' confidence, making students feel safe and not worrying about making mistakes when taking part in different class activities, as "errors were parts of the language-learning process" (Senior, 2001, p. 49). The explanation for this, from their points of view, is that humour is a very quick way to be human, thus is crucial in the teacher-student relationship, which has a positive impact on students' learning.

One other frequently mentioned advantage of humour in class is that humour has cognitive benefit. According to these teachers, the engagement of some humour during the lesson would help students pay attention to the lesson and remember the language points better, especially when the humour employed was relevant to what was being taught. These points of view confirmed the reported results in previous studies. Ziv (1988, p. 13) stated that "retention of material illustrated by humorous examples is most effective when these examples are relevant to the material taught", Neuliep (1991, p. 354) mentioned teachers' humour use in the class as "an attention-getter", Deiter (2000, p. 23) found out that "the use of humour helps to gain students' attention and keep their interest in the material being presented", White's (2001) findings included teachers' using humour to gain attention, or Petraki and Nguyen (2016)'s study revealed the role of humour in helping students understand more and remember points better.

From teachers' perspectives, those teacher respondents acknowledged that humour could be an effective way for them to deal with students' wrong behaviour and even helps the teachers themselves overcome the pressure in their teaching career. In Powell & Andresen's (1985) point of view, a teaching career is an exacting and unrewarding activity, therefore, could be made more sustainable if the teacher could gain satisfaction through the use of humour. The researchers of the same study

also claim the indirect connection between humour and learning in the sense that teachers' humour is "a means of managing undesirable student behaviour such as arriving late to class, talking, reading newspapers and so on" (p. 81). Deiter (2000) shares a similar idea in his paper, suggesting that when teachers manage to prepare and use humour efficiently in the classroom, they would find that "teaching is more fun and enjoyable" (p. 23). In other words, the employment of humour brings about benefits for not only the students but the teachers as well.

Results obtained from the student participants about their perceptions of the role of humour in language teaching show great similarities with those in teachers' responses. The majority of the two groups of participants in this study (71 % of the teachers and 94.2 % of the students) were in agreement with each other that the use of humour is important in language teaching and learning. Specifically, most students acknowledged that humour was of help in making them feel more relaxed (84.6 %), making them learn the language better (87.4 %), and enabling them to concentrate more on the lesson (80.8 %). In addition, such student respondents claimed that humour could also increase their understanding at some difficult points (72 %) as well as improve their ability to learn a language by creating a more comfortable and helpful learning environment (82.8 %). For all these positive functions of humour, these students showed their preference for their teachers' regular employment of humour in the language classroom (62.5 %). What seems to be evident from these high percentages is the popularity of humour engagement among the students in this study. The responses obtained from the students in this study supported Berk's (1996) findings that humour was effective in reducing students' anxiety, improving their ability to learn and making it possible to perform at one's best. Such figures also confirmed the significant advantages of humour on language learning, as Deiter (2000, p. 20) states "humour is a teaching tool that can create a more positive, fun, interesting environment that promotes class attendance and student learning".

In summary, the consistency between the teachers' and students' responses on the role of humour in language classroom supported the argument for a positive relationship between humour and education as discussed in the literature. It is therefore recommended that language teachers should make any attempts to incorporate some humour in the lesson so that the effectiveness of teaching and learning would be enhanced.

5.4 What are the students' responses towards their teachers' use of humour in the lesson?

The results gained from the students' responses in this study regarding their teachers' incorporation of humour in teaching correspond with teachers' reports on their use of humour during the lessons.

In general, most students (88.5 %) acknowledged that their teachers made every attempt to employ some forms of humour during their teaching process. It is important to note here that, in students' opinions, the majority of such humour was relevant to the lesson, which supported Ziv's (1988) suggestion that humour would be most effective when it was related to what was being taught. A large number of students (70.2 %) said that their teachers' humour was always understandable, which indicated that the attempts at humour by the teachers in the present study were not only effective but appropriate for the majority of their students as well. Considering the assumption that not all cultures respond to humour in the same way (White, 2001), and humour is not a phenomenon which is transferrable among countries, the employment of humour by those teacher participants in this study was thoroughly and carefully adapted.

The student respondents' viewpoints on the relationship between teachers and students bear significant similarities with the literature. Gorham & Christophel (1990) state that humour is of help in enhancing teacher-student relationship, whereas Neuliep (1991), Askildson (2005) and Petraki & Nguyen (2016) report that teachers' employing humour are seen as more approachable by students. Previous research has shown that good rapport built between the teacher and students is crucial for language learning (Deiter, 2000). In a class with students coming from different cultures, this teacher-student relationship is even more important to ensure an effective learning atmosphere. Furthermore, humour and creativity are related, and "there is a connection between HAHA and AHA" (Goodman, 1995, p. 41). That is to say, through this high percentage (91 %), it is revealed that all the teacher participants in this study managed to create a good relationship with their students, which plays a really important role in enhancing students' learning.

Another benefit of humour engagement in the lesson that the students reported is that their teachers' humour increased their interest in learning, which would consequently increase class attendance. Berk (1998) stated that teachers' humour may give students a reason to attend class, which was then supported in Deiter's (2000) surveys that students were more likely to attend classes where humour was used and more likely to skip boring classes. A large number of the student participants also indicated that humour is an important characteristic of a teacher (65.4 %). Such a result supported the findings in Senior's (2001), Nguyen's (2014) and White's (2001) studies, which showed students' preferences for humorous teachers.

5.5 Do students' perceptions of humour vary depending on student gender or nationalities?

Results obtained from the student survey indicate that, on average, students' gender and cultural backgrounds did have an impact on the students' perceptions of humour, however, these did not have the same level of significance among various items in the questionnaire.

With regard to student gender and their perceptions of humour, the significant differences between male and female students were present in females' stronger level of agreement than that of males on the opinions considering (*1*) humour as an important characteristic of a teacher, (*2*) humour as a concentration-enhancing factor during the lesson, and (*3*) humour as a factor improving learning ability by creating a more comfortable and helpful learning environment. In other words, in this study, females tended to express more positive attitudes toward humour than males did. Interesting as it may seem, such finding is not consistent with what has been reported in the literature. In their study, Gorham and Christophel (1990), on investigating teachers' use of humour in relationship to immediacy and students' learning, indicated that male and female student perceived humour differently, nevertheless, male students were more affected by the teacher's humour than females. Specifically, these researchers found out that male students' learning outcomes were more strongly influenced by teacher's humour than were female students; and the former group's "indication of learning, attitude toward the course content, overall attitude, intent to enrol in another course with the same teacher, overall behavioural intent as well as overall affect" (Gorham and Christophel, 1990, p. 55) were positively correlated the humour incidences by their teachers. Possible explanations for such discrepancy in the students' perceptions of humour will be discussed later in this section.

The findings of this study also reveal that there were differences between the students' different nationalities and the perceptions of their teachers' humour as well as the humour-learning relationship. As mentioned above, the unbalanced nature of the sample of students made it more difficult to address this research question than would have been the case if there had been a more even spread. The cultures represented in the non-Chinese group also contained students from several Asian cultures which have cultural similarities to China, and only a small number of other countries. For this reason, it was clear to the researcher that any findings must be treated with extreme caution. However, after analysis revealed statistically significant differences between the groups, the decision was taken to include them in the findings.

Responses from the survey show that non-Chinese students more strongly expressed their preferences for their teachers' regular employment of humour in the language classroom than Chinese students, and that the former group of students' level of agreement with the role of humour in relaxing students, helping students learn better as well as improving their ability to learn a language was greater than that of Chinese students. It is worth noting here that these two groups of nationalities differ with each other in the level of agreement, and none actually expressed disagreement. In other words, neither of the groups contested the benefits of humour on their learning. Also, respondents' answers were consistent among items in the questionnaire: as non-Chinese students more strongly agreed with the positive effects of humour on learning, they preferred more of their teachers' employment of humour in the lessons.

One possible explanation for the differences in the students' responses to their teachers' use of humour as well as their perceptions of the role of humour in language classroom with regard to gender and nationality is the diversity in students' cultural backgrounds (See 3.4.2). Literature has reported that there are individual and cultural differences in the

appreciation, creation, attitudes to, and uses of humour (e.g., Martin et al., 2003; Kazarian & Martin, 2004, 2006; Saroglou & Scariot, 2002). In addition, the significance of laughter may vary among cultures. Despite the fact that findings obtained from these researchers' studies just focused on the differences in humour usage and psychological well-being, it can be argued here that these individual humour styles may also have certain impact on their perceptions of humour in the field of education. However, considering the fact that the number of students per each nationality is not balanced, with the majority are Chinese (71 Chinese versus 33 non-Chinese), and the non-Chinese group includes students from 8 different countries; further empirical studies on the possible impact of humour on individuals across cultures must be conducted before any firm conclusions can be drawn.

There may have been other explanations for the findings of the present study. First, as the student participants were diverse regarding levels of English, the original English questionnaire was translated into various languages for students at low levels (pre-intermediate and intermediate classes). Thus, it is possible that the translated versions may yield "items that do not perform well, either due to an imprecise translation or due to cultural differences" (Ruch & Heintz, 2016, p. 436). This will consequently result in deviations in the results among respondents of the survey. Added to this, due to the constraint of time for an MRes thesis, the data collection process lacked follow-up interviews with students; therefore, the researcher had no chance to clarify the students' answers in the questionnaire. In fact, it may sometimes happen that some student participants did not expend enough effort in choosing the most appropriate option for each item. Therefore, their responses in the questionnaire would not reveal what they actually think in practice. Future research in the field should take this limitation into consideration so that the most reliable results could be obtained.

In summary, this chapter has summarised the findings in terms of the five research questions formed at the onset of the research. The findings have been considered in relation to significant findings in the literature. Added to this, recommendation has been raised concerning the engagement of humour in language classes with a view to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

The next chapter shows limitations of the study as well as suggests implications for further studies in the field.

6 CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter briefly summarizes the key research findings, presents the limitations of the study as well as suggestions for further research.

6.1 Summary of key findings

This research aimed to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions and practices of humour in EFL lessons in multicultural classroom settings. Together with the teachers' frequency of using humour, preferences for certain humour types, and perceptions of the roles of humour in language teaching, special attention was also given to the relationship between students' gender as well as cultural backgrounds and perceptions of humour.

Results show that, in general, the employment of humour was popular among the teachers and students in the present study. On average, the frequency of humour use by the teacher participants was higher than what was reported in the literature.

These teachers' choices of humour types when delivering lessons were also diverse, falling into four main categories (related, unrelated, self-directed and other-directed humour) and 25 subcategories. Although limited in variety of cultural background, responses from the student participants reveal that the student gender and nationality had different impact on their perceptions of the humour-learning relationship as well as responses to their teachers' humour use: with regard to the teachers' humour employment and the humour-learning relationship, stronger level of agreement were pronounced for female students and non-Chinese students in comparison with male students and Chinese students respectively.

6.2 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

As mentioned before, the constraints of time did not allow the researcher of this study to conduct interviews with the students after they completed the questionnaires, thus, the survey may not reveal reliable quantitative findings as there was no chance to clarify students' responses. Further research in the field should consider employing student follow-up interviews in order to strongly validate the results obtained.

The present research is also limited in the samples of participants. The number of teachers taking part in the study was not balanced in terms of gender, and they were all middle-aged. The findings were therefore specific to the participants and the contexts involved in this study. A more various range of teacher participants' features will be significant in generalizing the results to a broader population.

Added to this, despite the fact that the students' cultural backgrounds were diverse, the majority was Chinese. Also, for some cultures, the number of participants was very limited (only one or two students per country). Hence, results on the impact of nationality and gender on the perceptions of humour may not reveal significant implications. Future empirical studies could minimize this limitation by selecting the balanced number of participants among different groups of cultures.

Furthermore, although most teachers and students in this study held positive attitudes toward the relationship between humour and learning in the sense that humour could help students study better, there was no indicator of such cognitive benefit (e.g., test scores or final exam results). Thus, long-term study could be conducted to see whether teachers' use of humour during a course may have influence on students' test scores or performances of that course.

Last but not least, although the present study did provide a list of specific examples by the teachers observed, as well as the contexts in which they were used (see Appendix 4), the fact is that a number of humour incidences physically performed by some teachers were missed as the researcher could not manage to record them all in the field notes. Ethical constraints mean that the use of videorecording in this research would have required an individual written consent from every student in the class, plus the organisation of alternative activities for those who did not elect to take part. It would have been prohibitively difficult to achieve in the timeframe allowed. However, the coding of the humour attempts would become more complete, detailed and efficient if future research could involve the video camera recording during the class observation.

6.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, despite such limitations, it is anticipated that this research paper will be of potential value to education in general and EFL teaching in particular. First of all, the study did provide an original research-based taxonomy of humour

types which were successfully employed and had positive responses from the students. Depending on the particular contexts, language teachers may consider incorporating such examples of humour in their teaching to enhance the classroom atmosphere as well as motivate the students. Moreover, this study is the preliminary research exploring the perceptions of humour with regard to student gender and cultural backgrounds. Hence, the results of this study can provide the basis for future research in the field.

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RE: HS Ethics Application - Approved (5201600712)(Con/Met)

FHS Ethics <fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au> 10/11/16

to Jill, me

Dear Dr Murray,

Re: "The use of humour in English language teaching in Australia: A case study of a university ELICOS centre" (5201600712)

Thank you very much for your response. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and approval has been granted, effective 11th October 2016. This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Jill Murray

Mrs Mai Thi Hoa Tran

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 11th October 2017

Progress Report 2 Due: 11th October 2018

Progress Report 3 Due: 11th October 2019

Progress Report 4 Due: 11th October 2020

Final Report Due: 11th October 2021

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/application_resources

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/managing_approved_research_projects

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/managing_approved_research_projects

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Anthony Miller

Chair

Faculty of Human Sciences

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The Faculty of Human Sciences acknowledges the traditional custodians of the Macquarie University Land, the Wattamattageal clan of the Darug nation, whose cultures and customs have nurtured and continue to nurture this land since the Dreamtime. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

APPENDIX 2: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Date:
Class:

THE USE OF HUMOUR IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer the questions below. You will be helping us to understand more about your perceptions of the role[s] of humour as well as attitudes towards your teachers' use of humour in English language classrooms. We are interested particularly in the benefits of humour when used by EFL teachers in Australian classes.

Please answer the questions as honestly as you can. There are no ***right*** or ***wrong*** answers to these questions.

Part 1: General background information:

1. Age:
2. Gender: Male □ Female □
3. Nationality: Class:
4. Years of studying English:
5. Did you study with native teachers before coming to Australia?

   Yes □ How long? _____

   No □

<u>Part 2</u>: Perceptions and attitudes towards humour use in English language classrooms

For Questions from 6 to 18, please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate column:

Statement	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Slightly disagree (3)	Partly agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly agree (6)
6. Humour is an important characteristic in a teacher.						
7. My teacher often uses humour in English language teaching.						
8. My teacher's use of humour is relevant to the lesson.						
9. Humour makes me feel more relaxed (*i.e.* less anxious) in the language classroom.						
10. Humour in the language classroom makes me learn the language better.						
11. Humour in the language classroom helps me concentrate more on the lesson.						
12. My teacher's use of humour increases my interest in learning.						
13. I always understand my teacher's humour.						
14. My teacher's use of humour makes him/her closer to me.						

15. Humour can increase my understanding at difficult points.						
16. Humour improves my ability to learn a language by creating a more comfortable and helpful learning environment.						
17. I would like my teacher to use humour in the language class regularly.						
18. The use of humour is important in language learning.						

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION ☺

APPENDIX 3: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE (Korean)

Date:
Class:

유머를 이용한 호주 내 영어 랭귀지 수업

아래의 설문조사에 응해주셔서 감사합니다. 여러분이 작성하신 모든 답변은 선생님이 유머를 이용한 호주 내 영어 랭귀지 수업에 관해 여러분의 인식과 태도를 이해하는 데 많은 도움이 될 것입니다. 저희는 특히 호주 내 EFL (*English as a foreign language)* 선생님들이 유머를 이용하여 수업을 진행했을 때, 어떠한 이점이 있는지 알아보고자 합니다.

최대한 솔직하게 답변해 주시기 바랍니다. 모든 질문에 정답이나 오답이 정해져 있는 것이 아닙니다.

[유머의 종류는 다음과 같습니다: 농담, 수수께끼, 언어유희, 재미있는 이야기, 재미있는 답변, 만화, 사진, 표정 놀이, 제스처 등]

<u>항목 1:</u> 기본 배경 정보

1. 나이:
2. 성별: 남 ◻ 여 ◻
3. 국적:
4. 영어 공부한 기간:
5. 호주 오기 전에 원어민과 영어 공부한 경험:

예 ◻ 기간 _____

아니오 ◻

<u>항목 2:</u> 유머를 이용한 영어 랭귀지 수업에 관한 인식과 태도

질문 6번부터 18번까지 여러분 의견에 해당하는 칸에 (□)로 표시 하여 주시기 바랍니다.

항목	전혀 동의하지 않는다 (1)	동의하지 않는다 (2)	어느정도 동의하지 않는다 (3)	어느정도 동의한다 (4)	동의한다 (5)	매우 동의한다 (6)
6.유머는 선생님에게 있어서 중요한 덕목이다.						
7.본인의 랭귀지 수업 시간에 선생님이 자주 유머를 사용한다.						
8.선생님이 수업 시간에 하는 유머가 수업내용과 관련이 있다.						
9.유머가 긴장감을 줄이는 데 도움이 된다고 생각한다. (예: 불안감 감소)						
10.수업 시간에 하는 유머가 언어를 배우는 데 도움이 된다고 생각한다.						
11.수업 시간에 하는 유머가 수업 집중도를 높이는 데 도움을 준다고 생각한다.						
12.수업 시간에 선생님이 하는 유머가 공부에 흥미를 붙이는 데 도움이 된다고 생각한다.						
13.수업 시간에 선생님이 하는 유머를 모두 이해한다.						
14.수업 시간에 선생님이 하는 유머가 학생들과 친해지는 데 도움이 된다고 생각한다.						
15.어려운 문제를 이해하는데						

유머가 어느 정도 도움이 된다고 생각한다.						
16.유머을 통해서 좀 더 편안한 학습 환경을 조성함으로써 언어 학습 능률을 키우는 데 도움이 된다고 생각한다.						
17.유머가 어느 정도 언어학습에 효과적이라고 생각 한다.						
18. 수업시간에 선생님이 어느 정도 유머러스한 농담을 하는 것을 선호한다.						

설문지 작성에 협조해 주셔서 감사합니다

APPENDIX 4: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE (Japanese)

オーストラリアの英語授業におけるユーモアについて

本調査にご協力頂き、ありがとうございます。このアンケートは、英語の授業にユーモアを取り入れることへの感じ方や考え方に対し、理解を深めるためのものです。特に、オーストラリアでの授業においてEFL（英語を母語としない人々のための英語）の教師たちがユーモアを取り入れることのメリットに着目しています。

出来る限り率直にお答えください。以下の質問には、正解、不正解のような決まった答えはありません。

ユーモアの種類には、ジョーク、なぞなぞ、ダジャレ、おもしろい話、愉快なコメント、アニメ、写真、顔の表情、ジェスチャー等が含まれます。

パート１：ご自身についてお答えください。

1. 年齢：
2. 性別：　　男性　□　　女性　□
3. 国籍：
4. 英語を勉強している年数：　　クラス：
5. 渡豪する以前に、英語を母語とする教師に習う機会はありましたか？

   はい　　□　　期間＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

いいえ　□

パート２：英語の授業にユーモアが取り入れられることについて、どう思うかお答えください。

6から18の質問では、下記の項目に当てはまるか否か、該当する欄にチェック（✓）をつけてお答えください。

項目	全く当てはまらない (1)	当てはまらない (2)	あまり当てはまらない (3)	やや当てはまる (4)	当てはまる (5)	よく当てはまる (6)
6.ユーモアは教師にとって重要な要素である。						
7.私の先生は英語を教える中で、よくユーモアを取り入れている。						
8.　私の先生のユーモアは、授業内容に関係している。						
9.　語学の授業にユーモアがあると、よりリラックスできる。（不安が軽減されるという意味。）						

10. 語学の授業にユーモアがあることで、その言語をより深く学ぶことができる。						
11. 授業中のユーモアは、授業への集中力アップに役立つ。						
12. 私の先生のユーモアは、学習意欲を高める。						
13. 私は、先生のユーモアをいつも理解できる。						
14. ユーモアがあることで、先生の存在をより身近に感じる。						
15. ユーモアがあることで、難しい内容への理解を深めることができる。						
16. ユーモアがあることで、居心地良く、有益な学習環境が作られ、語学の学習能力が向上する。						
17. 語学学習において、ユーモアを取り入れることは重要である。						
18. 語学の授業で、常にユーモアを取り入れてほしい。						

ご協力ありがとうございました☺

APPENDIX 5: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE (Chinese)

日期:
班级:

澳大利亚英语语言课堂中对幽默的运用

非常感谢您能够抽出时间回答以下问题。您将帮助我们更多地了解对于教师在英语语言教育课堂中运用幽默的您的观点和态度。我们的研究意向主要为澳大利亚的英语语言教师（EFL teachers）在课堂上运用幽默的益处。

请尽量如实回答以下问题，答案并无对错之分。

[幽默的种类包括：玩笑，谜语，双关语，笑话，幽默的点评，卡通，图片，面部表情，姿势等等]

1. 基本背景信息
   1. 年龄：
   2. 性别：　　男 □　　女 □
   3. **国籍**：　　课程：
   4. **您有多少年学**习英语的经验：
   5. **您在来到澳大利**亚前是否**接受**过以英语为母语的教师授课：

      是 □　　**您接受**过多久此类授课？

      否 □

2. 对英语语言教育课堂中运用幽默的观点和态度

   6至18项问题，您是否认同或反对如下的陈述，请在您认为合适的框中打勾√

陈述	**强烈反对 (1)**	**反对 (2)**	**不太认同(3)**	**部分认同(4)**	**认同 (5)**	**非常认同**

						(6)
6. **幽默是老**师应该具备的重要特征						
7. **英**语课上您的老师经常运用幽默						
8. **您的老**师对幽默的运用与课程内容相关。						
9. **在**课堂上运用幽默让您感到更放松（减少焦虑）。						
10. **幽默在**课堂上的运用**有助于您更好地学**习英语。						
11. **幽默有助于**让您在课上提高注意力。						
12. **老**师对幽默的运用能增加您的学习兴趣。						
13. **您**总能完全理解老师的幽默。						
14. **老**师对幽默的使用增进了师生关系。						
15. **幽默能增**进您对难点的理解。						
16. **幽默能通**过创造一个更舒适、更有益的学习环境来提升你的学习语						

言的能力。						
17. **运用幽默在**语言教学中十分重要						
18. **您希望您的老**师在教学中经常运用幽默。						

感谢您的参与！

APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you think about the role of humour in general in language teaching?
2. How often do you use humour in your teaching?
3. What types of humour do you often use when teaching? Do you plan these uses?
4. Are there any lessons/ situations where you think it is not suitable to use humour in teaching?
5. Are there any types of humour which you think are not appropriate in class?
6. What kind of lessons and what kind of students should teachers use humour in their language teaching?
7. In the lesson, I observed [humour type]. Can you recall that? Can you say any more about how it helped the lesson?

APPENDIX 7: COMPLETE LIST OF HUMOUR EXAMPLES BY THE OBSERVED TEACHERS

Context	Examples	Classifications (by different researchers)					Others	Comments
		Bryant et al. (1979)	***Gorham and Christophel (1990)***	***Neuliep (1991)***	***Wanzer et al. (2006)***	***Frymier et al. (2008)***		
Team girls defeated team boys in a game.	"That never happens: The boys never beat the girls".	Humorous comment *(a brief statement with a humorous element)*						
A male student answered the teacher's question in a funny way, his answer was not related to what was being taught.	"Tricky boy"!	Humorous comment *(a brief statement with a humorous element)*	Brief tendentious comment directed at an individual student	The teacher makes a brief tendentious comment directed at an individual student	Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Unrelated humour (Teases students in class)		
One student on being called on to give answers forgot the vocabulary. Her partner reminded her.	"Good help"!	Humorous comment *(a brief statement with a humorous element)*	Brief tendentious comment directed at an individual student	The teacher makes a brief humorous comment directed at an individual student	Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Unrelated humour (Teases students in class)		
One group of students included	"Good! Three girls. Go"!						☐	

1 boy and 3 girls.								
One student was asked to give his answer but said "I don't know".	"You're not sure. A good answer".	Humorous comment *(a brief statement with a humorous element)*	Brief tendentious comment directed at an individual student	The teacher makes a brief humorous comment directed at an individual student				
One student was called on to give answers but she didn't talk loud enough	The teacher whispered: "Can you talk a little bit louder?"				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards students/ teasing)	Other-disparaging humour (teases students in class)		
The teacher encouragedthe students to discuss their ideas in groups.	"Normally four heads are better than one".	Humorous comment *(a brief statement with a humorous element)*						
The teacher encouraged students to raise their voice without worrying about making mistakes.	"Please make a mistake".						☐	
One student gave a wrong answer.	"A good mistake"	Humorous comment *(a brief*	Brief tendentious comment	The teacher makes a brief humorous	Humour unrelated to class material	Other-disparaging humour		

		statement with a humorous element)	directed at an individual student	comment directed at an individual student	(directed towards student)	(Teases students in class)		
The students were asked to talk about their dream job in the future, one student said that he didn't want to do anything but still got a lot of money.	"Very good dream job. If you don't do anything and you've got a lot of money, please tell us how".	Humorous comment *(a brief statement with a humorous element)*						
One student gave the wrong word when answering the question.	"Well-done! You learnt that word this morning but I don't think it is in this case".				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Other-disparaging humour (Teases students in class)		The students burst into laughter for astonishment : at first they thought that the answer is right, however, in fact it was wrong.
The teacher wanted to elicit the word "restaurant critic" but one student gave the word "restaurant eater".	"We don't eat restaurant. It's a horrible job".						☐	The teacher said with raised voice and facial expressions, which made the class burst into laughter.
Pre-writing activity: The students were	The teacher told a humorous but true story about the fact that many				Related humour			

required to read a text about the transnational companies. A part of the reading text mentioned toxic substances in milk products made in China.	Chinese tourists bought boxes of milk when going to the shopping centre, and the Australian government had to limit the number of milk boxes each person could buy each time				(stories)			
The teacher elicited ideas from the class but the students kept silent.	*1."What do you call a deer with no eyes"?* (The answer: *no idea*). 2. *What do you call a deer with no eyes and no legs?* (The answer: *still no idea* – the deer has no legs, so it's not moving)				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Other-disparaging humour (Teases students in class)	☐	These examples may be categorized as riddles or word play in general context. However, in this context, the teacher's purpose was to tease the whole class for not having any idea.
Funny examples to explain the use of the present perfect continuous (for long duration of time)	- I have been standing here for 30 seconds - I have been sitting here for 5 seconds - I have been running for 1 meter - I have dropping my pen - …				Related humour (examples)	Related humour (uses funny props to illustrate a concept or as an example).		
Warm-up activity (to revise	The teacher read the words aloud, students took				Related	Related		

vocabulary in the previous lesson)	turn to run to and write down the words on the board. Students were asked to run and write as quickly as possible to win the game.				humour (activities)	humour (facilitates student role-play exercises to illustrate course content)		
Warm-up activity (to revise vocabulary in the previous lesson)	The teacher read the words aloud, students take turn to run to and write down the words on the board. Students were asked to run and write as quickly as possible to win the game. However, for the last word, the teacher read aloud his name.						☐	The students burst into strong laughter for astonishment when hearing the word.
Revising vocabulary before writing)	*Guessing words:* Two representatives from 2 groups stood facing their classmates. The teacher showed the word on the screen; their classmates used body language or explain the meanings of the words for the 2 representatives to call out the words.				Related humour (activities)	Related humour (facilitates student role-play exercises to illustrate course content)		
Motivating the class after hard time of practice activities	*Running dictation:* A short story was stuck on the wall right outside the classroom. Students worked in their group: one						☐	This activity is not only of help in "waking up" the class but

	secretary being responsible for rewriting the story, the other members took turn to run, read one sentence each time, ran back to the class and read to the secretary to write down. The winners were those who finished the story first with fewest mistakes.							also effective in integrating the four language skills in one activity. Students laughed on competing with each other to become the winners, and on bumping into their classmates when running.
Teaching vocabulary	The teacher opened his eyes wide, looking directly at the students (new word: *eye-opening*)				Related humour (teacher performance)	Related humour (performs or acts out course material to illustrate concepts)		
	The teacher used body language and made the sound (new word: *hoot*)				Related humour (teacher performance)	Related humour (performs or acts out course material to illustrate		

						concepts)		
	- ---- (a boy's name) is unaccustomed to going out with girls (new word: *unaccustomed*)				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Other-disparaging humour (Teases students in class)		The teacher invented the example about that student's personality
	The teacher mimed and used body language to explain the meaning of the word *obesity*.				Related humour (teacher performance)	Related humour (performs or acts out course material to illustrate concepts)		
	The teacher used body language and facial expressions to elicit the meanings of the new words: *1. dice* *2. jockey*				Related humour (teacher performance)	Related humour (performs or acts out course material to illustrate concepts)		
	The teacher used body *1. densely* *2. blood pressure* *3. remote*				Related humour (teacher performance)	Related humour (performs or acts out course material to illustrate		

						concepts)		
	T told a funny story about the jumper became frozen when hung outside in a freezing evening in Japan - *freezer* - *freezing*				Related humour (stories)			
	"If --- (a student's name) comes to my house and steals things, he's a *burglar*".				Related humour (examples)	Related humour (uses funny props to illustrate a concept or as an example).		
	The teacher used funny drawings to elicit the meanings of the words: - *summit (n)* - *half way (n)*				Related humour (using media or external objects to enhance learning)	Related humour (uses funny props to illustrate a concept or as an example).		

	- On teaching words with similar meanings but conveying different feelings (e.g., gaunt – thin – athletic), the teacher drew funny icons to illustrate.				Related humour (using media or external objects to enhance learning)	Related humour (uses funny props to illustrate a concept or as an example).		
Explaining grammatical rules	The teacher used action and different voice tone to explain the nature of the verbs - *pay, buy*: short duration of time; - *try*: long period of time				Related humour (teacher performance)	Related humour (performs or acts out course material to illustrate concepts)		
Discussion: Activities students did last weekend	"Go to the party? You didn't invite me"?				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Other-disparaging humour (Teases students in class)		The students burst into laughter on looking at the teacher's facial expression when saying (he pretended to be extremely upset)
	"Were there any good-looking boys at the party?"				Humour unrelated to	Other-disparaging		This question was followed

					class material (directed towards student)	humour (Teases students in class)		by other questions describing the activities they had done. They laughed as a result of astonishment .
Lead-in: The teacher introduced the grammar section	"Now, let's move to the sexy grammar".						☐	It came as a surprise to the students as the teacher considered the grammar section "sexy".
Giving instruction before listening activity.	T uses his body and rhyme the sentence *"Always read the questions first"* as a lyric in the song. Then he called one student to the board to do that action again. (to remind students to read the questions before listening)				Related humour (teacher performance)	Related humour (performs or puts on an act in class to be funny)	☐	The students laughed at both the teacher's and their classmate's action. Humour derived from the student's performance does not belong to any reported category.
Encouraging solidarity and cooperation spirit	The teacher asked the students to make a *"human pyramid".*						☐	

in pair work and group work								
Motivating the classroom atmosphere	"I'm old, I'm bald, I'm short. I'm very ugly" (verbal and facial expression)		Brief tendentious (self-deprecating) comment directed at self	The teacher makes a brief humorous (self-deprecating) comment directed at himself/herself.	Self-disparaging humour (make fun of personal characteristics)	Self-disparaging humour (make fun of themself in class)		
	"The other teacher is young. She is good. So you don't need me anymore, is that right"?		Brief tendentious (self-deprecating) comment directed at self	The teacher makes a brief humorous (self-deprecating) comment directed at himself/herself.	Self-disparaging humour (make fun of personal characteristics)	Self-disparaging humour (make fun of themself in class)		
	"--- (teacher's name) is super stupid.		Brief tendentious (self-deprecating) comment directed at self	The teacher makes a brief humorous (self-deprecating) comment directed at himself/herself.	Self-disparaging humour (make fun of personal characteristics)	Self-disparaging humour (make fun of themself in class)		
	The teacher told a funny story about his past experiences: "When I was young, I was very bad, I always caused				Self-disparaging humour (make fun of	Self-disparaging humour (tells		

	troubles, and my teachers used to let me stand outside the classroom for hours"				himself/herself)	humorous stories about their personal life)		
	"Be careful. He is very intelligent"!						☐	
	"He is gay, I know, he doesn't know what to say".				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Other-disparaging humour (Teases students in class)		This student is intelligent and very active. He took part in all activities eagerly.
	"Go on! You're much younger than me" (when the students looked tired)		Brief tendentious comment directed at the class as a whole	The teacher makes a brief humorous comment directed at the class as a whole	Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards students)			
	T raised the question: *What's the best thing about Switzerland?* After the class discussed and had no answer, T said "I don't know, either".						☐	
	When talking about talk turn in group work discussion. *"If I have nothing to say, I'll*						☐	

	try to disappear". (raising her voice & using facial expression when saying)							
Calling on the students to give their answers	"I want to hear your voice, these beautiful ladies"!						☐	
Encouraging the students to work with a new partner for each discussion.	"---- (a boy's name) wants to have a girl to talk to".						☐	
Reading activity: Instructing each group of students to work with their own paragraph.	"I'm going to sleep if you read the whole essay"						☐	
Lead-in activity	The reading text is a story about a couple, including their picture. The teacher asked the students: "Who are they?" After the students discussed a few minutes and had no answer, the T replied "I don't know, either. They are people".						☐	
Homework checking	The teacher gave requirements, and then asked the students to do						☐	

	another activity after 1-2 minutes. "I have changed my mind. Am I allowed"? (use facial expressions when saying).							
Notifying students of their inappropriate behaviour	"Good afternoon or Good evening"! (1 student came to class late – the class was in morning session)				Humour unrelated to class material (Critical/ Cynical)	Unrelated humour		
	"Wake up, --- (student's name)"! (One student seemed to be sleepy. T raised her voice and used facial expression when saying)				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Other-disparaging humour (Teases students in class)		
	"You look embarrassed when I stand next to you. I should move away". (2 female students didn't seem to act naturally with the presence of the teacher).				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Other-disparaging humour (Teases students in class)		
	"Put the phone away. The phone won't help you with the running, I promise". (one student used his mobile when the T required the class to take part in the running dictation game)				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Unrelated humour (Teases students in class)		

	"What's funny, ---- (student name)"? (This student used mobile in class)				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Unrelated humour (Teases students in class)		
	"It's your birthday today, I want you to sit next to me". (one student in the corner didn't pay attention to the lesson, the teacher called him to the front. That day was his birthday).				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Unrelated humour (Teases students in class)		
	"Speak to me"! (one student kept silent on being called to give answers. The teacher used facial expression when saying)				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Unrelated humour (Teases students in class)		
	"I'm the best dictionary in this room" (one student used mobile during the lesson, on being asked what he was using it for, the student replied "to look up new word").		Brief tendentious comment directed at the class as a whole	The teacher makes a brief humorous comment directed at the class as a whole	Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards students)			
On wearing the mike (to record the teacher's voice)	I look so stupid, right?	Brief tendentious (self-deprecating)	The teacher makes a brief humorous (self-	Self-disparaging humour	Self-disparaging humour	Brief tendentious (self-deprecating)		

		comment directed at self	deprecating) comment directed at himself/herself.	(make fun of personal characteristics)	(make fun of themself in class)	comment directed at self		
	I'm going to be famous. I'm a superstar.	Brief tendentious (self-deprecating) comment directed at self	The teacher makes a brief humorous (self-deprecating) comment directed at himself/herself.	Self-disparaging humour (make fun of personal characteristics)	Self-disparaging humour (make fun of themself in class)	Brief tendentious (self-deprecating) comment directed at self		
On introducing the researcher	She's going to see what I'm doing wrong to inform the director.						☐	
Pre-reading activity: The reading text is about the tallest man finds love	The teacher showed the picture of the man and ask one student: "Is he your father?"				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Unrelated humour (Teases students in class)		
	The teacher asked one student to talk about his girlfriend.				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Unrelated humour (Teases students in class)		
	The teacher told a story about a naughty boy becoming good after falling in love with a girl.				Related humour (stories)			
Motivating the	The teacher told a					Offensive		Although

classroom atmosphere	humorous story about homosexual wedding.					humour		these were categorized as offensive by previous researchers, laughter from students was observed in this study.
	The teacher told a sexual story.					Offensive humour		
	The teacher invented jokes about the students' interests				Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards student)	Unrelated humour (Teases students in class)		
	The teacher put the cloth and markers into her trouser pockets and went around the class.				Unrelated humour (Teacher performance)	Unrelated humour (performs or put on an act in class to be funny).		
	During the class activities, when the students called her name, the teacher replied "Yes, sir/madam".				Unrelated humour (Teacher performance)	Unrelated humour (performs or put on an act in class to be funny).		
Giving feedback on students' writing: *Writing about the similarities and differences*	The teacher used humorous examples to show students' mistakes (such examples should not be used in academic writing): - The library has a blue				Related humour (examples)	Related humour (uses funny props to illustrate a concept or as an example).		Laughter occurred as a result of astonishment. At first the students thought that

	carpet and the MUSE has a red carpet. - The library has one floor and the MUSE has two floors. …							such sentences were suitable as they were true, however, in fact they should not be used in academic writing.
	The teacher teased a female student about her shoes.		Brief tendentious comment directed at one individual student	The teacher makes a brief humorous comment directed at one individual student	Humour unrelated to class material (directed towards students)	Unrelated humour (Teases students in class)		
The teacher encouraged the students to use academic words in academic writing	"Rubbish words will get rubbish marks"						☐	
Instructing the students to learn 2 more new words a day, too many new words a day were impossible to remember.	The teacher called on 2 students to the front. He threw ten pens towards the students and asked them to catch. One student caught no pen and the other caught 1. He concluded "to learn 10 new words a day is impossible to do, like to catch 10 pens one time".						☐	Students laughed at both the teacher's and their classmates' performances.

APPENDIX 8: EXTRACT OF TEACHERS' RESPONSES

1. Teachers' thoughts of the roles of humour in language teaching

Humour was a really important factor in language teaching when used appropriately:

'Humour is the priority and the priority is learning'. (T1)

'Yes, you could use when possible, it would be great'. (T2)

'As I can see, one of the problems that students normally have is that they often feel uncomfortable. Too much humour can be distracting, but if you can use it sparingly, it can help them to relax and they can feel a little bit better as they can laugh with other students in the class'. (T4)

'I think it's really important'. (T6)

'In general, I think it's very important in all leaning'. (T7)

Possible effectiveness if a little humour could be engaged into the lesson:

'I wouldn't say very effective; I think it certainly can help language classrooms because if there's something that comes up a little bit funny, it can make life and the situation better'. (T3)

'It can be effective, you know, when you make a joke after you have done something really hard, it will get students ready for the next one'. (T5)

Humour could make students feel comfortable and interested, and the classroom atmosphere more relaxing, friendlier:

'You could use when possible, it would be great. It helps students to relax'. (T2)

'I think the friendliness in the classroom is also an important thing so that everybody can relax and become friendly'. (T3)

'Too much trouble can be distracting, but if you can use it sparingly, it can help them to relax and they can feel a little bit better as they can laugh with other students in the class'. (T4)

'Humour is a very good way of motivating them, relaxing them, so it's really important'. (T6)

'I'm going to ask questions when I'm not scared of the teacher. And I'm going to be able to make a mistake and have the teacher correct it without feeling offended. You know, if you want to learn things, you have to be able to ask questions, you have to be able to make mistakes and be accepted'. (T1)

Humour could create the connection, the rapport between the teacher and students:

'[…] So these are the basic things that you automatically get from having a bit of humour creating that connection between the teacher and students'. (T1)

'I think if people can see that you have got a sense of humour, it makes you, the teacher, more approachable'. (T3)

'I think it's one of the reasons why my students often find me so approachable'. (T4)

'I think if you are light-hearted, if you're not too serious, for some students, it can be really useful for particular groups of students'. (T5)

'I think it definitely helps with that teacher-student relationship'. (T7)

Humour helps to motivate students:

'[…] giving humorous comments or feedback to create a motivating atmosphere in the class'. (T4)

'It can motivate students, can relax them'. (T5)

'Humour is a very good way of motivating them, relaxing them, so it's really important'. (T6)

Humour plays quite an important role for class management purpose:

'I think it's important for class management, it can help to keep students paying attention to the lesson'. (T5)

'I think humour is an effective way to make the class go smoothly and you can control the class better'. (T7)

Managing the class by means of humour could be of great help when teachers have to deal with students' wrong behaviour in the class:

'[…] I'm not too nasty about that. It's better to make a joke about it rather than give them a hard time about what they are doing'. (T5)

'I think it can help to avoid a lot of problems, too. I use humour when I see students doing something that they shouldn't be doing'. (T7)

Sometimes, when I identify some kinds of errors, I might make some jokes about such errors, I would say something humorous not to make them think too seriously about those errors. (T3)

The relationship between teachers' use of humour and students' learning:

'Try to do it visually for them, you then explained it […], so explain it three different ways and they are more likely to remember'. (T1)

'I think physical humour is very great, very powerful for helping people understand grammar and vocabulary in particular'. (T1)

'It [humour] helps them to think outside'. (T2)

'So I think, when they remember the jokes, remember something funny that has happened, they can remember the language points'. (T7)

[…] but in most parts of the lesson, if they are bored, I'm going to do something funny to get their attention back. I need their attention a lot, so I use humour a lot. (T1)

It can help to keep students paying attention to the lesson. (T5)

Humour plays an important role in helping teachers overcome pressure in teaching:

'I think sometimes we, teachers, get more stressed because we know what we have to get through, if we forget the humour, we're going to be under pressure, too. So always try to use some humour in teaching'. (T3)

2. The frequency of teachers' using humour in teaching

Teachers would use humour in every lesson and humour was an integral part of their teaching styles:

Humour is the priority and the priority is learning. […] but in most parts of the lesson, if they are bored, I'm going to do something funny to get their attention back. I need their attention a lot, so I use humour a lot. (T1)

I use humour very often. (T4)

I always try to use some humour in every lesson. (T6)

I use humour all the time. I mean I dare not turn the class into a circus, […] but I think it can certainly relax students. (T7)

The frequency of humour use depends on types of students, students' levels as well as what was going on in the class:

Some classes are more challenging, some of students have great sense of humour […] and I tend to use a lot more humour. But for the classes with low level, I think it's easy for them to misunderstand humour. So it will depend on the level of students and students' personality. (T2)

Sometimes, it's a little bit more difficult to introduce humour when we're under certain time process, […] but usually in some ways in the class, there's some humour. (T3)

It depends on what's going on, it depends on activities […], I might joke about something. (T5)

3. Prepared or spontaneous humour

Always use spontaneous humour:

I have been telling jokes all my life. (T1)

It happens incidentally […]. Because when I do it, I just do it spontaneously, I don't prepare it. (T2)

It's always incidental. (T5)

Never. I don't ever think about preparing it [humour]. (T6)

Use both spontaneous and prepared humour:

[…] so some situations that occur in the class might bring me to remember that particular joke. (T3)

Sometimes it's incidental, sometimes it happens when I prepare my lessons. So it depends on the topic, depends much on the students. (T4)

To be honest, some of the jokes I have done before. (T7)

4. Teachers' preferred types of humour

Humorous comments (both related and unrelated to the lesson):

I do that [use humorous comments] most of the time, and it's also related to what's going on in the class room. (T5)

[…] so it makes the things in a softer way, they know they've done the wrong things, I don't need to say "you shouldn't …". (T7)

Sometimes, you know, when I identify some kinds of errors, […], I would say something humorous not to make them think too seriously about those errors. (T3)

I try to avoid being very language-based because they are in the situation of being short of language […], I used a lot of body language, facial expressions and humorous comments […]. (T4)

Teachers' performance (those teachers called "physical humour"):

I think physical humour is great, very powerful for helping people understand grammar and vocabulary in particular. Using your body language will help them remember because you give them something visual. (T1)

I often use physical humour because they [students] can see exactly what we're doing in communication. (T2)

I don't know if I would identify any particular forms of humour that I use, but I probably use facial expressions a lot. (T3).

I try to avoid being very language-based because […], so I think that when I focus most on physical humour, it doesn't rely on their ability to understand it. (T4)

[…] but I know that I like to perform. A lot of language teachers are performers, and I'm one of those. So the humour that I use is sometimes almost like stand-up comedy. (T6)

Jokes:

[...] So I keep making jokes over-simple. (T4)

You almost have to be close to native to understand a joke in another language because most jokes rely on the play with language. [...]. The joke I chose for the class was mostly physical, you didn't need language to understand that joke. (T1)

They often love jokes to do with relationship like boyfriend, girlfriend, mother, so such jokes often work well. (T2)

Sometimes I tell them jokes with words. (T3)

With high levels, I sometimes use double words, you know, words with double meanings. (T6)

Others:

I think a lot of humour is personal. Finding out something about the students and using that. [...]. And if you don't have personal things, make it up. (T1)

And sometimes you can draw some humorous pictures, it's really fun. (T3)

Short funny story is alright if it's relevant. [...]. Between activities, yes, I might do that. (T5)

5. Inappropriate humour in the class

Humour making fun of students, embarrassing students, making students feel attacked, uncomfortable and offended:

> Never make fun of someone, never embarrass someone, never. That's wrong, that's rude. You might have stopped them from wanting to continue studying. (T1).

> As I said, I used it to make students feel more comfortable, so if it's the topic or some types of situations that make them feel attacked or less comfortable, I absolutely don't use. (T4)

> I mean the teacher has to be careful not to offend anybody, that's really important. (T5)

> So the teachers have to be very careful that they're not doing anything, saying anything offensive. (T7)

Impolite humour, sensitive humour, jokes about cultures and cruel humour:

> I think impolite things; impolite humour would be inappropriate to use in the classroom. (T2)

> I think you have to be somewhat sensitive to some kinds of humour such as political humour […]. And you also need to be careful about gender. (T3)

> I never make jokes about certain cultures' sensitivity. (T4)

> I think cruel humour, humour that mocks people, […]. Humour about disability, humour about body, humour about cultural backgrounds, don't do that because you may be misunderstood. (T6)

6. Types of lessons and effects on teachers' use of humour

Humour could be used for every level of students and in every type of lesson:

> We can use humour for every kind of lesson. […]. I find it hard to talk about humour in a lesson as being something separate. (T1)

> I can use it at all levels. Maybe the types of humour change. In a very low level, you have to use a different kind of humour because they don't understand. But with a higher level, your humour can be a little more adult, more sophisticated, perhaps a little more verbal, but you can use it all the time. (T6)

Teachers' use of humour depended on the types of lesson:

> It probably does depend a little bit more on the types of the lessons, but hopefully we can, through some forms of humour, keep the situation some more enjoyable. It's a little bit hard but I have always tried to use some forms of humour in the classroom. (T3)

> It's easier in a general class, there's a little bit more flexibility in terms of the topic, a little bit more fun, we can use some types of games. But I say, even in academic English class, I do use some types of humour to keep the class going, to help students learn better. (T4)

> I think academic is more difficult because we've got really restricted with the content, […], but we should create something funny to motivate the students. (T7)

Students had great influences on teachers' use of humour rather than the types of lessons:

> I think it much depends on the people in the room. I can't think of any specific situation that I wouldn't use humour. So we can apply it, depending on the students. (T2)

> Actually, it's more difficult to use humour inn academic English classes, but sometimes it really depends on the students. (T5)

APPENDIX 9

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Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 8740
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Email:jill.murray@mq.edu.au

Advertisement of Participant Recruitment 1

Dear teachers,

If you are a teacher of English language with at least one-year experience in teaching and your learners are adult students coming from different backgrounds, you are warmly invited to take part in my study entitled *The use of humour in English language teaching in Australia*. The purpose of the study to investigate how students from different backgrounds respond to

Australian ESOL teachers' use of humour in class as well as identify how and to what extent Australian ESOL teachers use humour in language teaching in the adult classrooms. The study is being conducted by Mai Thi Hoa Tran (email: mai.tran@students.mq.edu.au) to meet the requirement of the MRes Thesis under the supervision of Dr. Jill Murray, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University (email: jill.murray@mq.edu.au).

Your participation will make a significant contribution to research in this field and contribute to the ongoing improvement of the teaching of English both as a first language and as a foreign language.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked for approval to the researcher's class observation at least once. You will also be asked to give your opinion about the use of humour in English language teaching through an interview with the researcher. The interview will just take you about 15 to 20 minutes. For the purpose of data analysis only, the class observation and interview will be recorded.

We will not be asking you anything sensitive, and the information gathered from you is absolutely anonymous. You will be free to withdraw from any parts of the study without any explanation and consequences.

If you are willing to participate in this study or have any further question, please contact Mai Thi Hoa Tran (email: mai.tran@students.mq.edu.au).

Sincere thanks,

APPENDIX 10

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Advertisement of Participant Recruitment 2

Dear students,

If you are an international student coming to Australia to study English language, you are warmly invited to take part in my study entitled *The use of humour in English language teaching in Australia*. The purpose of the study to investigate how students from different backgrounds respond to Australian ESOL teachers' use of humour in class as well as identify how and to what extent Australian ESOL teachers use humour in language teaching in the adult classrooms. The study is being conducted by Mai Thi Hoa Tran (email: mai.tran@students.mq.edu.au) to meet the requirement of the MRes Thesis under the supervision of Dr. Jill Murray, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University (email: jill.murray@mq.edu.au).

Your participation will make a significant contribution to research in this field and contribute to the ongoing improvement of the teaching of English both as a first language and as a foreign language.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire whose purpose is to collect data about your perceptions and attitudes towards the use of humour in English language classrooms. The questionnaire will just take you about 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

We will not be asking you anything sensitive, and the information gathered from you is absolutely anonymous. You will be free to withdraw from any parts of the study without any explanation and consequences.

If you are willing to participate in this study or have any further question, please contact Mai Thi Hoa Tran (email: mai.tran@students.mq.edu.au).

Sincere thanks,

APPENDIX 11

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109
Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 8740
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Email:jill.murray@mq.edu.au
Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Dr. Jill Murray

Participant Information and Consent Form(Teachers)

Name of Project: **The use of Humour in English Language Teaching in Australia: A Case Study of a University ELISCOS Centre**

You are invited to participate in a study of using humour in English language teaching in Australia. The purpose of the study is to investigate how students from different backgrounds respond to Australian ESOL teachers' use of humour in class as well as identify how and to what extent Australian ESOL teachers use humour in language teaching in the adult classrooms.

The study is being conducted by Mrs. Mai Thi Hoa Tran (email: mai.tran@students.mq.edu.au)to meet the requirements of MRes degree under the supervision of Dr. Jill Murray (email: jill.murray@mq.edu.au) of the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked for approval to the researcher's class observation at least once. You will also be asked to give your opinion about the use of humour in English language teaching through an interview with the researcher. The interview will just take you about 15 to 20 minutes. For the purpose of data analysis only, the class observation and interview will be recorded.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Data obtained from your responses will be presented in the thesis or resulting publications but they will always be de-identified. Only the researcher and her supervisor (Mrs. Mai Thi Hoa Tran and Dr. Jill Murray) will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request if you contact Mai Thi Hoa Tran via the email address above.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, (*participant's name*) have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:_____

(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: Date:_____

Investigator's Name:_____

(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: Date:_____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY

APPENDIX 12

OBSERVATION NOTES

Date:

Class:

Teacher:

Lesson:

Student nationality:

Examples of humour	**Context**	**Students' reaction**		**Comments/ Notes**
		Positive (laughter)	***Negative***	