

Teachers' humor as a communication strategy in creating positive environment in English course

Dzakia Tunnisa

Graduate Study of State University of Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

Corresponding email: dzakiatunnisa.kia@gmail.com

Abstract: This study investigates teachers' humor as a communication strategy in creating positive environment in terms of interaction between the teacher and the students in teaching and learning process at Makassar English Course. The aims of the study are to find out the types of humor that are appropriate in English course and to find out the impacts of humor in creating positive environment in English course. This research consisted of five students that were interviewed as a subject of the research. In collecting data, this research used some procedures namely observation and interview. The recordings were transcribed and analyzed by making use of related the types of humor used by the teacher and the impact of teacher's humor in creating positive environment in English course.

The first finding showed that the EFL teacher used all of the types of appropriate humor, namely related humor, unrelated humor, self-disparaging, and unplanned humor. Furthermore, the writer found the new types of humor that occurred by the teacher namely plan feedback humor and remind humor. The second finding showed that the teacher who used humor makes the students easy to getting the knowledge, humor reduces tension, students are more comfortable in teaching learning process, students interact well with their teacher, students was more enthusiastic in teaching learning process, students attendance became encouraged, and students are not sleepy.

Keywords: Teachers' humor, Communications Strategy, Positive Environment

Introduction

Good interactions between teachers and students have been proven to be the biggest contribution in creating a positive environment (Banks, 2014; Luz, 2015). Communication and interaction between teachers and the students are the most potential activity that provides the opportunity to create an exciting atmosphere in the classroom. Therefore, a teacher has many opportunities to design fun learning during his interaction. One thing that has rarely been touched during this time but can help the teacher to make excitement in the classroom as well as cover the previous situation is by using humors. When teachers use humor effectively in the classroom, it can result in a number of benefits for teachers and students evaluations (Bryant, Comisky, Crane, & Zillmann, 1980) and it will lighten the mood and help reduce the anxiety of students in the classroom. Thus, highly recommendation to the teacher before starting of the lessons to create a pleasant condition, so that the students feel more comfortable and willing to accept the subject (Neumann, Hood, and Neumann, 2009). In regard with the context of investigating the use of

teachers' humor in EFL classroom, this research was conducted in English course context. Thus, the aims of this study are to find out the types of humor that are appropriate in English course and also to investigate the impact of humor in creating positive English environment in English course.

Method

This study employed qualitative descriptive method based on discourse analysis approach. The participant of this research were eight students in MEC English course and one of English teacher. The chosen subject is based on the information that the researcher got from some teachers and students in MEC that this teacher has good sense of humor and he applies jokes in teaching. The data was gathered from the classroom observation and the interview from a teacher in their 90-minute classroom settings where English was the object and the medium of teaching learning process. The classroom setting was in MEC English course. The researcher adopted interactive model which was proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014).

Findings

After investigating the data from the observation and the interview, the researcher found as follow:

1. Types of humor used by the teacher

Based on the first research question, this research aims to find out the types of humor that are used by the teacher in the classroom. According to (Wanzer et al,1999), there are two types of humor; they are appropriate (positive) and inappropriate (negative or offensive). Appropriate humor is categorized into four types: humor related topic, humor unrelated to a topic, self-disparaging humor, and unplanned humor. In this research the researcher focuses on appropriate humor in spoken form.

Table 1. The Occurrence of the types Appropriate Humor in Each Meeting

Appropriate Humor	Meeting					Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Related humor	5	11	9	6	1	32
Unrelated humor	4	3	5	1	5	18
Self-disparaging humor	1	1	-	-	-	2
Unplanned humor	-	1	3	3	-	7
New type of humor (Flat feedback humor)	-	2	-	-	3	5
New type of humor (reminded humor)	1	2	2	2	-	7
Total			71			

Table 1 above shows that the teacher produced 71 utterances containing appropriate humor within five meetings of classroom interaction. The teacher used all of the types of appropriate humor, namely related humor, unrelated humor, self-disparaging humor and unplanned humor. Furthermore, the researcher found the new types of humor that was used by the teacher namely flat feedback humor and reminded humor. Thus, the researcher found that the amount of humor utterances used by the teacher in the classroom

interaction in Makassar English Course was 71 utterances.

Table 2. The Percentage of the types of Humor Used by the Teacher in the Classroom Interaction

Types of Appropriate Humor	Frequency	Percent age
Related Humor	32	45.1%
Unrelated Humor	18	25.4%
Self-Disparaging Humor	2	2.8%
Unplanned humor	7	9.86%
The new type of humor (flat feedback humor)	5	7 %
The new type of humor (reminded humor)	7	9.86%
Total	71	100 %

Table 2 shows that the teacher produced 71 utterances which contained all of the types of appropriate humor and the new types of humor that were found by the researcher namely flat feedback humor and reminded humor. Flat feedback humor within two meetings of classroom interaction and reminded humor within four meetings of classroom interaction. The table also showed that related humor occurred in 32 utterances (45.1%), unrelated humor occurred in 18 utterances (25.4%), self-disparaging humor occurred in 2 utterances (2.8%), unplanned humor occurred in 7 utterances (9.86%), flat feedback humor occurred in 5 utterances (7%) and reminded humor occurred in 7 utterances (9.86%).

2. The impact teacher's humor in creating positive environment in English course.

From the results of students' interview, the researcher concluded several impacts of humor in creating positive environment at MEC English course.

Excerpt 1: Help the students acquire knowledge easily

- T :How is your English teacher's closeness to your student in the classroom?*
I :Pintarki guru mengajar pembawaanya santai tapi tidak terlepas ji pembahasanta sama materi. Jadi kita juga santai maki kalau

mau bertanya ataupun berdiskusi jadi secara alami ee kita juga lebih gampang paham lebih cepat ngerti jadi yah ee banyakmi ilmunya didapat.

Excerpt 1 above shows that the students were more interested in the lesson and accepting the process of digesting material easily if their teacher used humor in the classroom. In this case, the student said that if the teacher used humor in the classs, he was easily to ask and to discuss with him so he would more understand into the material. It could make the students having more knowledge and make them understanding their teacher's explanation toward the material quickly

Excerpt 2: humor reduce tension

T : What do you think about your English teacher ?

I :Kalo guruku orangnya baik lucu kalau misalnya dia lagi ngajar dia santai pelajarannya tapi tidak terlalu santai sekali misalnya mengajar terus dia tidak kasi tegang muri dnya dia kasi rileks muridnya.

Excerpt 2 above describes that the student was enjoying the teaching and learning process if the teacher used humor in the classroom. The teacher in teaching process made a good trend of creating psotive environment by using humor because it made the students not nervous and enjoyed this situation.

Excerpt 3: Students were more comfortable in learning process

T :How would you feel when the teacher delivered humor / funny stories?

I :Suka kak kak jadi kaya ada penyemangat, maksudku kak ada yang bikinki happy dan suka suasana kelasnya kan berubah sekali memang moodnya siswa dari pada yang monoton begitu begitu to ji saja apa lagi itu tutorku, guru yang benar benar dekat sama muridnya jadi bisa itu toh humornya berkaitanji dan nyambungji sama kita jadi benar benar terbawa ki suasana yang menyenangkan dan bikin semangat juga buat belajar karna ndak bosanki sama suasana dikelas.

Excerpt 3 above the student was more comfortable in teaching learning process if her teacher was humorist. She liked studying English if in the teaching, the teacher was used humor as a communication strategy. The students could enjoy the class and enhance the student's enthusiasm.

Excerpt 4: A Students interacted well with their teac

T :How is your English teacher's closeness to your student in the classroom?

I :Bagus sih kak, kan cara mengajarnya juga ndak killer ji ndak bikin takut takutji juga eee apa die e itumi tadi sih kubilang kak asik buat diajak ngobrol ndak kaku, santai tapi serius, biasa juga sembarang dicerita bagusji juga dia pembawaannya.

Excerpt 4 above if her teacher used humor in teaching process, it made the student interacting well with their teacher. Furthermore, the students liked the way the teacher interacted with them because they could freely talk and chat with the teacher. While the teacher used of humor in the classroom could make communication more flexible between students and teacher, this condition led to positive classroom environment.

Excerpt 5: Students were more enthusiastic in learning process

T :How would you feel when the teacher delivered humor / funny stories?

I :menurut saya bagus skali cara mengajarnya kalo ada humornya karna lebih semangatki dirasa belajar walaupun baruki pulang sekolah lanjut les tapi pembawannya memang guruku menyenangkanmi jadi yah ikut terbawa maki juga.

Excerpt 5 above, she was more enthusiastic in teaching learning process which used humor. She felt tired of lsson load in formal classroom so the humor was likely a cure for her to be exicted again in learning .

Excerpt 6: Encourage the Student's Attendance

T : Is the teacher's humor positive and constructive?

I :Iyye biar tidak sesuai materi tapi ndak bosanki menyenangkanki kelaska suka maki juga datang kurus ka asikji

Excerpt 6 above, she attendance to the class was encouraged. Even the humor was not related to the material, she enjoyed the class because the atmosphere of the classroom was not boring.

Excerpt 7: Students were not sleepy in learning

T :How much humor plays a role in your foreign language learning process?

I :Ndak ngantuk ki dikelas karna ketawa terus ki di kelas jadi hilang juga rasa ngantuk karna suasana kelas yang menyenangkan.

Excerpt 7 above shows that she was interested in learning and awake from her boredom if her teacher used humor in the classroom. It made the students not sleepy. In addition, the student was likely to say that if the teacher was more serious without any humor inserted in his teaching, then the process of learning was not interested anymore or it was not even effective for learning English language.

Discussion and conclusion

Based on the 29 extracts analyzed in the finding, the researcher found that all of the types of appropriate humor in spoken form were used by the teacher in EFL classroom, namely related humor, unrelated humor, and self-disparaging and unplanned humor. Furthermore, the researcher found the new type of humor used by the teacher namely flat feedback humor and reminded humor. Flat feedback humor can be identified when the teacher gave a story, joke or humor to the students. It was intended to be funny but the student did not respond to it, thus the students did not laugh. Reminded humor can be identified by utterances that have purpose to remind the students that their behavior should not be done. Someone should tell it by giving humor and make others laugh but they are already aware and seen changing attitude change their attitude. In reminded humor, the teacher are already aware of it. And if this type of humor is successfully released, there usually seen changing in students behaviour or even attitude.

The second finding of this study is the impact of teacher's humor in creating positive environment in English course. From the results of students' interview, the researcher found that the teacher who used humor help the students acquire the knowledge easily, reduce tension, make more comfortable in learning process, students interacted well with their teacher, make students more interactive, students were not sleepy, encouraged students' attendance. In this part, those impacts are elaborated in line with Danielson Framework of positive classroom environment and corresponded with the theories as well as previous findings.

References

Banks, T. (2014). Creating positive learning environments: Antecedent strategies for

managing the classroom environment & student behavior. *Creative Education*, 5(07), 519.

Bryant, J., Comisky, P., & Zillmann, D. (1979). Teachers' humor in the college classroom. *Communication Education*, 28(2), 110-118.

Chabeli, M. (2008). Humor: A pedagogical tool to promote learning. *Curationis*, 31(3), 51-59.

Danielson, C. (2013). *The framework for teaching: Evaluation instrument*: Danielson Group Princeton, NJ.

Englert, L. M. (2010). Learning with laughter: Using humor in the nursing classroom. *Nursing education perspectives*, 31(1), 48-49.

Hsieh, C.-J., Hsiao, Y.-L., Liu, S.-J., & Chang, C. (2005). Positive psychological measure: constructing and evaluating the reliability and validity of a Chinese Humor Scale applicable to professional nursing. *Journal of Nursing Research*, 13(3), 206-215.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*: sage.

Neumann, D. L., Hood, M., & Neumann, M. M. (2009). Statistics? You must be joking: The application and evaluation of humor when teaching statistics. *Journal of Statistics Education*, 17(2), 1-16.

Sileoni, E. (2005). *Effect of Humor on Motivation in Foreign Language Learning*. (Master of Arts), Youngstown State University, United States.

Wanzer, M. B., & Frymier, A. B. (1999). The relationship between student perceptions of instructor humor and students' reports of learning.