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Padang, October 23 - 24, 2015

UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG
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(FBS)

Promoting Local Wisdom and Enchancing Better Learning on Language, Art, and Culture

Editors :

Ismet Fanany (Deakin University, Australia)
Atmazaki (Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia)
M. Zaim (Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia)
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Yos Sudarman (Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia)

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USING HUMOUR IN EFL CLASSROOM INTERACTION: AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF BURNING STUDENTS' INTEREST IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract

Teaching English at secondary school level is meant to enable students to grasp out communicative competences. To attain this purpose fruitfully, English teacher needs to consider the strategy how to encourage students to take a part in classroom interaction. One of strategy that can be played by English teacher is "humour" because it is like a battery—creating good circumstances in doing communication. This study approaches teacher-students interaction in EFL classroom from pragmatic perspective. This study explores the types and functions of humors used by the English teacher in classroom interaction at the tenth grade of Islamic Senior High School. The data were video recorded from three different classrooms in 90 minutes English lesson. The data were analyzed based on the theory of Gay and Airasian (2000), Miles and Hubberman (1983) and Chelimsky (1989). The results of the study shows that (1) there are five types of humour used by English teacher in classroom interaction, namely (a) irony, (b) teasing, (c) banter, (d) language play and (e) jokes; and (2) the humours used by English teacher functions as (a) developing open and supportive communication climates, (b) enhancing positive interaction, (c) creating amusement, (d) lowering students' anxiety, and (e) fostering students to be courageous to take a part in classroom interaction.

Keywords: Humours; EFL Classroom Interaction; Learning English

A. INTRODUCTION

In the EFL classroom, teacher need to consider not only about how student comprehend materials, but also many aspects, such as classroom atmosphere, students condition, etc. These aspects will influence students' readiness in grasp out learning material. It means a good teacher should give attention to everything, he/she tries to be his/ her students' ears and eyes, he thinks as if she/he is student in order to find out why student are very quiet; are they bored? Are they anxious. In fact, many teachers are not care about it at all, they fail to manage their classes because they are not knowledgeable about their students. Besides, some teachers still used traditional strategies in teaching English in the classroom. Meanwhile, in this modern area everything becomes interesting for students more than studying in the classroom itself. So it is such a competition for a teacher how teacher can be an interesting thing for students too. It means, it is time for an English teacher to move on, find another strategy to get students interest in learning English. Humor is one of good strategies that can be used by the English teacher. In this study, humour can be defined as teacher-initiated attempts to stimulate laughter and amusement in verbal classroom interaction. According to Norrick (2003), humour can be grouped into five, namely (1) irony, (2) teasing, (3) banter, (4) language play and (5) jokes.

Using humour in classroom has many benefits. Pham (2014) classifies the benefits of humour in education field in two categories—direct and indirect benefits. In direct way, humour can give advantages as (1) improved retention information, (2) better understanding of material, and (3) increase students' performance. Whereas, in indirect manner, humour can (1) increase teacher immediacy and lessen psychological distance between teachers and students, (2) lower students' affective filters, (3) create a safer, more open classroom environment and (4) lead to better rating of teachers or teaching.

Moreover, in the language classroom, according to Girdfanny (2004) humour is good to use because when the teacher use it, the students pay more attention in order to not miss any of the jokes or witticisms. Besides, humor can open students to new ideas and increase their motivation, because they are more willing to take risks and view mistakes as opportunities for learning. Furthermore, Sujatha, Kannan and

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Tyagi (2012) states that humor can create low-anxiety learning in the classroom. It means with humor, students will feel fresh in the classroom, and less their anxiety. At the end their relationship becomes good and the teacher does need to force students to be active and give attention anymore.

In the field of studying classrooms, several studies have proven that teachers use humor as effective means of establishing rapport and developing open, supportive communication climates" (Stuart and Rosenfeld 1994). In other words, humor is seen positively both in relation to the atmosphere of the classroom and the teacher-student relationship. Humor provides teachers with an opportunity to enhance positive interaction in the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the students (Späre 2008). One might consider humour as a mere tool for creating amusement for a short amount of time, but in classrooms it can serve a greater purpose by creating a positive learning environment and enhancing the social relationships between the teacher and his/her students. When used appropriately, the positive outcomes of humour in classrooms are thus beyond brief amusement.

In addition, studies from several literatures indicates supportive results towards the use of humor in teaching. Humor not only lowers students' anxiety but also enhances learning on a purely cognitive level (Rhem, 1998). Besides that, humor is also identified as a teaching technique for developing a positive learning environment. It is crucial for the teachers to create a conducive environment for learning as they play a critical role in the classroom. When teachers establish a supportive social climate, students' minds are stimulated and they become more attentive. The teachers can use humor in the classroom. They rarely laugh, smile, and say jokes in the classroom especially in the senior high school. They even punish students and warn them to pay more attention on their studies. The students are scared to ask questions, and thus failed to communicate with teachers. They feel high anxiety in the classroom. In fact, if teachers can use humor, they can have good relationship with students in the classroom.

In addition, Humor can be a style of teachers' communication, where it can help students better to understand the process and enhance or frustrate students' efforts to learn a language. Furthermore, humor can also help some students who are shy or embarrassed to talk in the class. Once the students reduce their anxiety, their ability to communicate in the target language enhance better. Regarding the points mentioned above, the present study aims to find the answers to the following questions:

1. What is types of humor used by English teacher in the classroom interaction?
2. To what extent does English teacher use humour in the classroom interaction?

B. METHOD

This study used qualitative research with content analysis design. It describes kinds and functions of humors used by English teacher in the classroom interaction. This study was conducted in the tenth classes of Islamic senior high school. The data were video recorded from three different classroom setting which consist about 90 minutes English lesson in the classroom. The data were analyzed based on theory of Gay and Airasian (2000), Miles and Hubberman (1983) and Chelimsky (1989).

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study results two main findings. They are types and functions of humour used by English teacher in classroom interaction.

1. Types of Humor Used by English Teacher in Classroom Interaction

Based on data analysis, it was found five types of humour used by teacher in EFL c;assroom, namely (1) irony, (2) teasing, (3) banter, (4) language play and (5) jokes. Each type of humor will be elaborated in the following description.

a. Irony

According to Audrieth (1998) irony is one of the leading elements in humor. It means the irony is used to express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning. The most common form of irony is the expression by which a person says the opposite of what they mean and the listener believes the opposite of what is said. In short, the humor here created by the teacher when the teacher says an untrue information or say the opposite of the fact to the students. The sample of this type of humoury is shown by following excerpt:

Teacher : *Everybody still alive?*
Students : (Laugh)

In this case, irony deals with the use of words to express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning. This irony can be found in the humor above, when the teacher asked a question about his students condition when entered the classroom. He said "*everybody is still alive?*" however, this statement brought irony as every students are there to learn, it was not same with what he has just said. Actually, the teacher knew that students there are alive not died. Consequently, students got laugh because of that question.

b. Teasing

Teasing is intentional provocation accompanied by playful off-record markers that together comment on something relevant to the target by teasing them (Norrick: 2009). So here, the teasing usually uses the word praise in teasing the students.

Teacher : Are you ok Ade? De, your smile, wow. *At this one, ade's smile make us being melt.*

Consequently, the humor occurred when the teacher tried to praise student who was smiling at that time. Whereas, the student often gives smiles in the classroom while the teacher teaching in the classroom. Here, the teacher teas student by praising student's smile, where it made everyone who looked at him being melt. Based on the principle of humor, this utterance belongs to teasing humor. It caused a teasing that did by the teacher. In this utterance, there was also a hyperbole that the teacher said to student "*Ade's smile make us being melt*". His hyperbole meant that student's smile has something like magic that made everyone around him melted like some salts in the water. In short, Hyperbole and metaphor are two ways to flout maxim of quality. It means the humor of teasing here resulted from flouted the maxim quality.

c. Banter

According to Audrieth (1998) Banter could be defined as a good-natured give and take, exchange of teasing or witty remarks between friends. It is synonymous with raillery and persiflage. The banter here in to create and reinforce relationship through social acceptance-friendship strategies.

Teacher : *Hanif, its just for people who 17 years old and up*
Student : (Smile)
Teacher : (Laugh)

Here the student has a short body as a student in his levels. The humor implies when the teacher talks about something in the classroom. Suddenly, the students laugh because of the teacher's said. Because of the student has short and small body, the teacher said "*Hanif, its just for people who 17 years old and up*". Spontaneously all of students laugh more. This example is related to banter. The researcher judged this one as the banter, because banter is synonymous with raillery. Here the teacher actually judges his students, but because they have a good relationship, it feels like just a humor for a fun. Besides, the humor here conducted by flouting maxim quality, where the teacher say something not true, where the student is 17 years old, it means he is also have a change to listen to the story that given by the teacher at that time.

d. Language Play

Language play can be defined in various ways. In linguistic terms it refers to "the conscious repetition or modification of linguistic forms, such as lexemes or syntactic patterns" (Belz, 2002). However, in relation to interaction, Lilja (2010) defines language play as paying particular attention to a certain feature of language and then targeting the feature humorously.

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Teacher : Ade, Alfi look at my white board. I will ask you letter to bring this white board home.
then copy this white board to copy center

The humor of Language plays here occurred when the teacher asked the student to stop writing what the teacher explained. The teacher stated that after the teacher explained the materials, everyone can bring the white board home or maybe copy the whiteboard, to photocopy center. The impact, this utterance made student laugh when hearing that statement. In this utterance, there was also a hyperbole that the teacher said to the students. The hyperbole meant to bring the white board to photocopy center. It was impossible, how people could copy the white board that has hard body and bid size. In short, Hyperbole and metaphor are two ways to flout maxim of quality. It means the humor of language here resulted from flouted the maxim quality.

e. Jokes

The term conversational joking could be used as an umbrella term for all the different types of humor presented here (irony, teasing, banter, language play). In the data, there are some jokes that can be found, as follows:

Teacher : what you eat ?
Student : same with Asri ?
Teacher : *what, satei ?*

The teacher utterance here brought the Jokes of humor. Actually, there is no a strong parameter for this humor type, but here the researcher stated everything that humors that out from the irony, banter, teasing and playing words is related to jokes. In addition, this humor made the teacher flouted the maxim of relation as well because what the teacher said is not relevant to the actual condition. In conclusion, joke here resulted from flouting maxim of relation.

2. The Functions of Humors Used by the English Teacher in the EFL Classroom Interaction

Humor not only has an entertainment function, but also has many social functions. The primary functions of humor in conversation are the effects that the speaker may achieve directly by using humorous segments in his or her discourse. The following section discussed the functions of humor used by the English teacher in the classroom interaction.

a. Developing Open, Supportive Communication Climates

Using humor in the classroom is good way to open communication in the classroom. As stated by Stuart and Rosenfeld (1994), teacher who use humor effective as a means of establishing rapport and developing open, supportive communication climates. So, here when a teacher began a communication with humor in the classroom, it will make the students happy to follow the class. The impact, they will wait the teacher to teach in their class again.

In addition, teacher who opens the communication in the classroom with humor will love by students. No matter what, students are value for teacher. They will try to compare between this teacher and other teachers. Shortly, students like to choose teacher who humorous in the classroom. When teacher has been loved by students, teacher can drive the class as what they want. In addition, humors also can makes the situation in the classroom being fresh, when the situation in the classroom was fresh, it make the students feel enjoy stay in the class. For example, it can be seen in the excerpt of the data bellows:

Teacher : *Everybody still alive?*
Students : (Laugh)

The excerpt above the proof that humor can developing open, supportive communication climates. The situation here every student looked so tired, bored and did not want to do some kinds of activities. Looked at this situation the teacher asked student like the excerpt above. So, it made the students

laughed and they feel something fun through the teacher's question. The impact, students who get tired and bored before became fresh and have a lot of spirits to continue the lesson.

b. Enhancing Positive Interaction

It is a widely known fact that humorous people are often perceived to be more cheerful and more popular. Besides that smile is the shortest distance between two people, so when humor works, it will enhance positive interaction. As stated by Spare (2008) humor provides teachers with an opportunity to enhance positive interaction in the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the students.

In the classroom, the most important thing is the interaction between teacher and students should be in good condition. To create this condition, the teacher can create humor by teasing the students, or maybe mocking the students and so forth. As a proof, it can be seen in the excerpt of the data belows:

Teacher : *Nyokan selalu senyum, samo jo si Ade*
sell the smile, jual senyum selalu. Don't sell your smile because we are the man
we are the boy. Sell your smile to all the girls.

This excerpt was a proof that humor can enhance positive interaction between teacher and students. This excerpt happened when the teacher saw a student who smile. The teacher took this turn to create a humor with the student. Actually this student was a person that not confident with himself, because he has a short body then others. In order to rebuild the student confident, the teacher created humor with this students. At the end, the student felt that this teacher care on him, love him and he respect the teacher more.

c. Creating Amusement for A Short Amount of Time

English is one the difficult subject to learn by students in Indonesia. So, the teacher should motivate students how they can learn English and doing interaction with English in the classroom. Aboudan (2009) stated that using humor encourages communication between students and teachers, and the classroom environment becomes freer and more open. So here, He found that students' communication increased and they were more motivated to learn the language. In short, beside the humor make the students enjoy to follow the class, in fact humor also can motivate student to learn language. Here, there were some data that proof by using humor it can creating amusement for a short amount of time, as follows:

Student : Excuse me mister?
Teacher : What ??
Student : Ingin masuk mister
Teacher : *In my language, not in your language ya! In my language*

The excerpt above happened when some students came late to the class. The students tried to get permission from the teacher. As a fact, when every student came late to the class, the students would wait outside of the class until the teacher obeyed the student join the class. Actually, here the teacher tried to mocking the students. It was such a punishment for all of students who came late to the class, by asked them to speak English in getting permission. Looked the student who came late reaction, it made another students laughed, and they felt fun looked their friends.

d. Lowering Student's Anxiety

English one of the scary subjects for some students to learn. The impact, when in the English class, some students are afraid to talk, they feel anxiety follow the class. So here the teacher needs to find a way to make the students do not afraid to learn English. So here, humor can lower student's anxiety. As stated by Sujatha, Kannan and Tyagi (2012) humor can create low-anxiety learning in the classroom. To make it clear, it can be seen as follows:

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Teacher : Don't be sluggish

Student : No, sir

Teacher : *If you are sluggish you are not good and you are not beautiful !*

This excerpt happened when the students finished their break time. Usually after the break time, every students lost much spirits to continue the class. It caused they felt that playing with friends outside of the classroom more enjoyable then studying in the classroom. In other sides, they felt sluggish also caused the effect of the anxiety to join the class. Looked this condition, the teacher teased the students in order to get back the students spirit. Here, the teasing from the teacher works well. The impact, the students thought that their teacher so care on their situation, and the felt something funny through the teachers teasing. So, it was clear enough that, humor can low students anxiety.

e. Fostering students to be courageous in the classroom interaction

English is a foreign language that difficult to be learned by students. Consequently, they will feel shy to speak in English, because in their mind "*shy to do some mistakes*". So here, as a teacher, he needs a tool to foster the student to be courageous enough to get involved in classroom interaction. Through humour, teacher can encourage the students to practice English. Here, the researcher found some data that humor can lessen students' shyness to talk in the classroom. It can be seen as follows:

Teacher : what you eat ?

Student : same with Asri ?

Teacher : *what, satei ?*

The excerpt shows us that utterances above happened when the teacher did such simple conversation before starting the lesson at that time. Here the teacher asked about student's breakfast. In this exchange the teacher chose a student to respon the question. When the teacher asked what the students ate in the breakfast, spontaneously the student answer it by saying same with her friends before. It looked the students afraid to talk in English, she was afraid of making some mistakes, so she just answered the teacher like what her friend did. Looking this condition, the teacher created a humor to make the students get involved in the interaction. So that, finally, the student changed her answered by saying "fried chicken".

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, it can coclude that there are five types of humours used by English teacher, namely (1) irony, (2) teasing, (3) banter, (4) language play and (5) Jokes. The most frequent humors used by the English teacher is banter and the least one is irony. In addition there are five functions of humors used by the English teacher. Those are as (1) developing open, supportive communication climates, (2) enhancing possitive interaction, (3) creating amusement for a short amount of time, (4) lowering students' anxiety and (5) fostering students to be courageous in the classroom interaction

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