

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses several points related to the topic. First, the researcher explains background of the study, the reasons behind the researcher's interest in carrying out this study. Second, the identification of the problem is presented in the next section, which also provides an explanation of the research problem. Then, the third section of this chapter examines the delimitation of the problem, which explains the boundary of the research. After that, the fourth section states the research questions. Next, the research objectives are discussed in the fifth section, which describes the purpose of the study based on the research questions. Furthermore, the sixth section outlines the study's significance and explores how the study has contributed to many educational aspects. Then, the last section is followed by the chapter's organization, which explains each chapter's contents.

### **Background of the Study**

Education plays an important role in determining a person's success in the future. In general, Indonesians began their education at a young age and continued until they reached adulthood. In education, especially in schools, students spend most of their time studying in the classroom. In the classroom, there is an order of actions in teaching and learning activities in which the teacher delivers knowledge to students. Each teacher and student influence the other for the teaching and learning process. As a result, good interactions are required because the most

important factor in creating a positive environment is positive interactions between teachers and students (Banks, 2014; Luz 2015).

Teachers play an important role in the classrooms. Giving instruction, explaining, demonstrating appreciation, encouraging, motivating, and answering students' questions is still heavily dominated by the teacher in the classroom (Senowarsito, 2013). Therefore, the teacher is in charge of all classroom learning activities. The teacher's delivery strategy determined whether the mood produced was pleasant or unpleasant. According to Wong et al. (2018), there are two types of teachers: the common teacher who tells and describes the lesson and the excellent instructor who displays and motivates when presenting the lesson. As a result, in order to be an excellent teacher, it is essential to be able to motivate and inspire students to learn.

In acquiring a language, such as English as a foreign language in Indonesia, Fadhilah et al. (2022) claimed that it is crucial to maintain a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. Good communication and interaction between teachers and students are important because it can help create a pleasant classroom environment (Banks, 2014; Luz 2015). Finding strategies to improve student learning is a never-ending challenge for most teachers. Unfortunately, Ocon (2015) claimed that most university teachers have received no formal instruction in how to teach effectively. As a result, many teachers are left to figure out how to make their lectures interesting and motivate student learning on their own.

For some students, learning a foreign language in an EFL class can be depressing, especially if their basic foreign language knowledge is still inadequate. According to Wagner and Urios-Aparisi (2011), lowering student anxiety can be more beneficial in the foreign language classroom, where students frequently experience higher levels of anxiety due to the contrast between their cognitive abilities and their linguistic skills. Furthermore, Ocon (2015) also stated that it is difficult to deliver knowledge to students in a way that encourages student interest and learning. Teachers are expected to increase student interest and learning of course materials by creating a learning environment in the classroom.

Borg (2006) qualified that EFL instructors are affectionate, provide excellent notes, conduct engaging activities, use humor, and refrain from pressuring students who are slipping behind the rest of the class. In this context, having a sense of humor is one of the characteristics of successful EFL teachers. In addition, it is utilized in the classroom for lessons. By using humor, teachers can encourage students to communicate in a lighthearted manner, which have many beneficial impacts on both teacher and students. Furthermore, Sujatha et al. (2012) also claim that humor can encourage low-anxiety learning in the classroom. However, the use of humor in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is remains scarcely.

All humans recognize laughter as part of a universal language of fundamental emotions. Furthermore, Dawood (2020) stated that humor is a human mind-aspect that causes amusement, makes people smile, laugh, or makes them

comfortable. Therefore, the teachers can utilize the power of laughter to enhance and improve teaching and learning. Lei, Cohen, and Russler (2010) reported that having a sense of humor is an important teacher characteristic that, when used appropriately, can be an effective pedagogical tool. This is beneficial to the continuity of learning activities humor can be used as effective way to help create fun learning activities, encourage attention, and can be used to pique students' interest in learning (Cann & Cann, 2013). Savage et al. (2017) stated this is a vital consideration since teaching is about more than simply content: it is about building relationships and strengthening human connections. Moreover, language learners appreciate the use of humor in the classroom, which encourages teachers to implement more humor into their classroom instruction (Farnia & Muhammadi, 2021).

In the EFL class at one of the universities in Yogyakarta, the researcher observed several classes in which the teachers used humor as a teaching strategy. The presence of humor in the classroom has a significant impact since humor has been shown to develop relationships and improve performance strategies used by teachers when used effectively (Israil, 2017). It is essential that the humor does not to have humiliating, derogatory, aggressive, harmful, and does not affect those involved in any way. If a teacher understands how to use humor effectively, it can create beneficial learning environments for students. Humor, in particular, promotes student performance by attracting and maintaining attention, reducing anxiety, encouraging participation and raising motivation (Savage, 2017). However, only a few of classes incorporate humor as a pedagogical strategy,

despite the potential benefits it can offer to learners as well as teachers in the context of foreign language acquisition in the classroom setting.

A previous study conducted by Hismanoglu et al. (2018) investigated the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners regarding the use of humor by teachers in the EFL classroom. This study provided insights that were relevant to the perceptions of EFL learners regarding the utilization of humor by teachers in the EFL classroom. In more details, this study revealed the following: (a) the significance of humor in the process of acquiring a foreign language; (b) the positive correlation between humor and student learning; (c) the sense of connection that students developed with their teacher through the use of humor; (d) the acquisition of knowledge regarding the target culture and language through exposure to native humor; and (e) the overall enhancement of students' foreign language learning capabilities through the usage of humor. At this juncture, the teacher's use of humor in the EFL classroom is currently the most effective way to facilitate the learning and teaching process. Unfortunately, this previous study remains afflicted by certain limitations. Therefore, the present study aims to enhance existing research by incorporating an investigation of several types of humor employed by teachers in the classroom setting. The study also seeks to contribute to the current body of knowledge on this subject matter.

Based on the above discussion, the researcher was interested in investigating the humor employed by teachers who use humor as a teaching strategy in the classroom. Moreover, because students were the ones who would be affected by teachers' taught strategies, it was essential to understand how they

responded to the use of teacher's humor in the classroom. This study was conducted by the researcher under the title: The use of humor in the EFL classroom. Therefore, this study seeks to discover the types of humor employed by teachers, as well as students' responses to teacher humor in the classroom. In addition, this research aims to enhance a better understanding regarding the potential of humor in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, with the expectation that the teachers of EFL will understand and appreciate the various benefits of humor.

### **Identification of the Problem**

The researcher discovered that some teachers of English approach instruction in their own classrooms with a serious manner. This repetitive teaching style will often induce anxiety and low self-esteem among students, prompt them to remain mute more often, and ultimately result in student boredom during class. Thus, it has turned into a big issue that teachers must address. Therefore, teachers may have been able to determine which technique or strategies would have contributed to the success of the class. For instance, the students' enthusiasm and the teachers' instructional methods are two elements that may contribute to the students' lack of interest in learning.

Therefore, it is critical to create an affective classroom environment, particularly in English classes; an English language classroom in which students are not afraid to make mistakes during the learning process. As a result, making the classroom environment pleasant can assist students in reducing the pressure they are under so students do not feel worried if they make a mistake during

learning activities. There are some teachers who employ strategies such as code switching from English to Indonesian, so that students can comprehend the material more easily. They also integrate humor into learning activities, such as telling humorous stories or cracking jokes.

According to Lems (2011), humor and laughter can increase students' interest in what they are paying attention to. Conforming to the previous studies has demonstrated that laughter can help students learn more efficiently in the classroom. Students can be more engaged in the lesson and sustain concentration if humor were used. However, it should be noted that not all jokes or humor expressed in class are appropriate for use as humor.

A significant number of students perceive language learning as a challenging one. It requires considerable diligence and effort from both the students and the teachers. The researcher has chosen this topic due to the prevalence of difficulties experienced by students as a result of their teacher's excessively serious approach to learning English in the classroom. Therefore, this method of teaching elicits feelings of boredom and reduces students' motivation and enthusiasm for the subject matter being presented. Based on the previously mentioned descriptions, the researcher exhibits an interest in figuring out the use of humor in the EFL classroom. Subsequently, the researcher aims to investigate several types of humor employed by the teacher inside the classroom setting and the responses of students towards humor employed by the teacher during English course sessions.

## **Demilitation of the Problem**

As previously stated, to narrow the scope of this study, the researcher wants to investigate the use of humor in the classroom, particularly in the EFL classroom. First and foremost, this study establishes delimits of the research focus. This research covers two main parts of investigation, specifically the types of humor employed by the teacher in the educational setting, as well as the responses elicited from the students to the humor. Secondly, the scope of the research is limited to the English Language Education Department of a private institution in Yogyakarta. Thirdly, the researcher establishes specific delimits by selecting a limited number of participants for this study. Specifically, only six participants from the 2020 batch will be selected. Moreover, the only research methodology employed in this study is the qualitative approach.

## **Research Question**

The researcher compiled the following research questions based on the previous background and in accordance with the objectives of this study:

1. What types of humor do the teacher use in the classroom?
2. What are the students' responses to the teacher's humor in the classroom?

## **Research Objectives**

Based on the formulated research questions, the research is purposed to find out:

1. The types of humor used by the teacher in the classroom.
2. The students' responses to the teacher's humor in the classroom.



## **Significance of the Research**

**For students.** Through the results of this study, the students can identify the types of humor used in the classroom. Furthermore, students should be cautious when telling jokes so that no one is hurt.

**For teachers.** The teacher can determine the types of humor and the student's responses towards teacher's humor in the classroom by knowing the results of this study. This research can be useful for teachers because it can provide them with additional information about how to incorporate appropriate humor into learning activities.

**For Institution.** This research can benefit the institution, particularly the department, and provide the department with additional information. This means, this study has the potential to provide recommendations for enhancing classroom engagement by incorporating humor into the classroom.

**For the next researchers.** The researcher hopes this study can be a resource for future research. Researchers in the future may use the study's findings or clarified points as a starting point for investigating other issues.

## **Organization of the Chapters**

This research is organized into five chapters. Chapter one discusses the research's background, which explains the main problem, demilitation of the problem, research questions, research objectives, significance of the research, and the organization of the chapters. Chapter two discusses of the literature review, which focuses on the types of use of humor and the student's responses towards

teacher's humor in classroom learning activities. Chapter three discusses the study's research methodology, which includes the research design, setting, participants, data collection method, and data analysis. Chapter four then goes over the findings and research discussion. The discussion reveals the outcome of the data analysis that was used to generate the answer to the question. The conclusion and recommendation are discussed in the final chapter.