



Teacher's Sense of Humor and EFL Learner' Vocabulary Knowledge

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ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of teacher's sense of humor on EFL learners' vocabulary development. It, further, tried to find out the possible difference between male and female students' views on learning vocabulary by using teacher's sense of humor. To this end, 60 Iranian EFL learners of both genders (30 male & 30 female) in a language institute of Rafsanjan were selected as the participants of the current study. They were elementary EFL learners that were selected based on available sampling. To explore the objectives of this study, a valid and reliable questionnaire was employed by the researcher and SPSS software version 24 was used for analyzing and interpreting data. The results of descriptive analysis indicated positive effects of teacher's sense of humor on EFL students' vocabulary knowledge. On the whole, the participants' overall satisfaction towards teacher's sense of humor was achieved by this study. Additionally, based on the result of inferential statistics, no difference was observed between male and female students' views on learning vocabulary by using teacher's sense of humor. It is worthy to note that the findings of this research can provide the students and teachers with evidence that sense of humor could be used to improve English students' vocabulary knowledge.

KEYWORDS

EFL Context, Teacher's sense of Humor, Vocabulary

RESEARCH PAPER

Introduction

The use of humor to facilitate learning is not a new concept, it seems to be an emergence today as more teachers and educators look for methods to better communicate and help students learn. Humor can be represented as jokes, puns, riddles, sarcasm, physical antics nonverbal behaviors, cartoons and one-liners (Wanzer et al., 2010). Unfortunately, students often consider many of their classes boring, difficult and stressful. Actually, teaching effectively requires imagination and creativity to turn student on by turning negative perceptions off (Deiter, 2000). Humor is a way of being funny or making people laugh (Lovorn & Holaway, 2015). Humor is also associated with one being silly and not being serious. However, in teaching and learning contexts, humor not only makes students laugh, it also enhances learning. Some benefits of humor highlighted in the literature include psychological benefits (relieving tension and stress), social benefits (improving teacher–student relationships in the classroom) and instructional benefits (enhancing students' comprehension and subject recall) (Lei, Cohen & Russler, 2010). Evidence indicated that teachers' sense of humor is related positively to increasing EFL learners' intrinsic motivation which is resulting in better academic achievements (Rinninger, 2000). Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides the basis for effective communication. Maintaining a large store of vocabulary is a demanding job for language learners and L2 teachers want to know which strategies and tasks are more effective in helping their students acquire as much vocabulary as they can in the most economical way (Khoii & Sharififar, 2013). According to Toyoda (2007), vocabulary is central to language and is of significant concern of not only EFL learners in reading significance to language learners. Nowadays, it is almost accepted that vocabulary learning is a vital component both of acquisition of one's native language and of learning a foreign language (Morra & Camba, 2009).

Teacher's sense of humor is a teaching tool in the classroom and is an effective way to engage student and to activate learning, therefore EFL teachers are responsible for creating a motivational environment. Unfortunately, most of the language teachers are not recommended to use humor while teaching (Kember & Kwan, 2002). Ziyaeemehr, Kumar, and Abdullah (2011) reported that the reason some teachers do not incorporate humor is, because teachers are not trained to use humor in teaching. Another reason is because some educators may see teaching and learning, especially in higher education, as a serious matter; therefore, they may consider teaching as something that should be done seriously (Lei et al., 2010). In Garner's (2006) viewpoint, most of language classes suffer teacher's sense of humor, and being more serious teacher, make students less motivated. Hence, gathering information on how teachers construct humor and how students perceive humor as a learning tool, could be valuable. However, due to the importance of teacher's sense of humor, little pedagogical research identified the role of humor on the EFL students' achievement. Since Iranian educational system was mostly based on the strict environment, making new and different context of learning as using humor in teaching, would be worthwhile.

Some of the most important problems that exist in the Iranian educational system are listed as the main one refers to being the seriousness of teachers. Some of the teachers are too strict that the students, particularly children or elementary group are afraid to ask questions in their classes (Dolatabadi and Mashhadi, 2018). It should be noted that in some institution only one or two teachers are selected to teach the age of group of children. So, it may seem boring to the children, after a while they do not want to come to their classes. In most classes, there is no teacher's sense of humor so it causes dryness in the classes and lack of desire to continue their class and children do not like their teachers (Motlagh et al., 2014). All in all,

lack of teacher's sense of humor in educational setting affects on students' progress in language which leads to slow processing speed of learning (Baringer & McCroskey, 2000). Absence of teacher's sense of humor can also decrease message comprehension (Wanzer et al., 2010) and creates less exciting and comfortable classroom atmosphere (Jones, 2014). Considering the mentioned problems, the current study was an endeavor to identify whether the use of teacher's sense of humor for instruction can serve as a helpful way in improving the Iranian elementary EFL learners' vocabulary development. In order to meet the research objectives, the following questions have been postulated:

- What is the effect of teacher's sense of humor on students' learning vocabulary?
- To what extent is the EFL learners' attitude positive toward vocabulary knowledge regarding teacher's sense of humor?
- What is the difference between male and female students' views on learning vocabulary by using teacher's sense of humor?

Findings of this study would redound the benefit of teachers' use of humor in the class and encourage them, text book writers, curriculum designers, test makers, and researchers to pay attention to their use of humor in the class. Therefore, it can motivate the students and achieve better outcome. Also, this research would increase the awareness that using sense of humor can predict learners' course engagement and their learning motivation in the class through learners' attitude.

Literature Review

In a more recent study by Hismanoglu (2018), Turkish EFL learners' perceptions on teachers' using humor in the EFL Classroom were assessed. In this study, a questionnaire was administered to 110 English preparatory program students to collect data on their perceptions on teachers' using humor in the EFL classroom. The interpretation of the findings in this study indicated that the use of humor had positive effects in the classroom. Findings showed that humor was important in the EFL classroom and that students indicated a high level of agreement on the positive role of humor in classroom teaching. In another recent study by Dolatabadi and Mashhadi (2018), the effect of humorous texts on vocabulary learning and rate of motivation among intermediate EFL learners was examined. Two English language teachers and Humor questionnaire were selected to teach the learners. The one interested in using humorous text was asked to teach vocabulary to the experimental group. The other teacher instructed vocabulary to the control group in the normal traditional way. The result revealed that teaching vocabulary through humorous texts was touching in improving learners' vocabulary ability and enhancing their rate of motivation. Results of pre and post-test indicated that using humorous texts as a treatment had a marked influence on Iranian high school intermediate male and female students' vocabulary achievement when compared to the traditional way. Continuing studies on the use of humor, Motlagh et al., (2014) investigated the effect of teachers' sense of humor on learners reading comprehension was explored. The researchers used humor questionnaire and sample test to choose instructors of this study. To do this, the teacher who got highest grade in humor questionnaire was chosen for teaching to experimental group and the person who got lowest grade on questionnaire was chosen for teaching to control group. Their study indicated that the appropriate level of teacher's sense of humor had positive effects on learners' reading comprehension.

Another study by Ziyaeemehr et al., (2011), the benefits of humor in Academic English classrooms were achieved. 195 undergraduate and postgraduate students were given open-response questionnaires and asked to provide their views on the benefits of the humor used by their instructors. The students reported that a teacher's instructional humor improved their comprehension, learning and retention of knowledge. In the same, Makewa et al., (2011)

analyzed the extent to which teachers use humor in teaching and students' ratings of their teaching effectiveness. Data was collected using questionnaire. Three hundred and eleven students responded to the questionnaire, which surveyed the students' opinion of their teachers. Thirty-five teachers also responded to the questionnaire. The results showed that the use of humor in teaching is generally good and that there is a significant, moderate relationship between the use of humor and students' rating of teachers' effectiveness. The results also highlighted that the most commonly used styles of humor among the students are the positive styles of humor. Baid, and Lemberts (2010) indicated that the employment of humor by a teacher can set people at ease especially in anxiety provoking environments and helps reduce the power differential between students and staff. In an empirical study by Benjelloun (2009) which set out to investigate the use of humor in the university classroom, 101 students were surveyed and preferred the teachers to use instructional humor as it helped students to pay attention in the class. Although the students noted positive effects of humor on the survey, this study did not ask students to justify their survey responses. Hence, it could not explain how humor assisted in gaining and retaining students' attention. Furthermore, Ziv's (1988) study examined two groups of students taught the same subject, but one group was taught using instructional humor, while the other group was not. The group of students taught with instructional humor scored higher in their test than the group of students taught without humor. Interestingly, the teachers who participated in the study were given proper training and specific guidelines on how to utilize humor while teaching. Thus, all humor used was instructional humor with the intention to enhance student learning in the classroom. However, a study by Houser et al., (2007) reached a different conclusion, finding that humor had no effect on student learning. A section of this study aimed to examine the effect of humor on the learning of 329 undergraduate university students. The students were given five fill-in-the-blank test questions to measure student recall of learning.

Method

Participants and Sample

The participants of this study were 60 Iranian EFL learners who were studying English in Can-do language institute of Rafsanjan, in the academic year 2020. All of them were elementary EFL learners of both genders. That is to say, the students were girls and boys whose age ranged from 10 to 12. Four elementary intact classes were selected based on available sampling. The participants were 30 male and 30 female native speakers of Persian. They received English for 4.5 hours a week and there was no chance of actual English use outside the classroom.

Instrument

In order to homogenize the participants in terms of their language proficiency, Basic Nelson Placement Test was employed. The test was administered at the beginning of the term when the learners were supposed to begin the study. Based on the results, out of 68 students, 60 participants whose scores on the language proficiency test fell within ± 1 standard deviation of the mean score, attended in the present project. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher employed vocabulary tests as the instrument to gather the data. A pre and post-tests were administered for both the experimental and control groups to investigate their vocabulary knowledge. The purpose of the pre-test was to identify the two groups' level before using the treatment (teacher's sense of humor), and the aim of post-test was to compare the results of the pre-test with the results of the post-test after the treatment. Each test was included 20 multiple-choice vocabulary questions, and the scores were calculated out of 20. In other to gather data, a questionnaire adopted from Abdali et al., (2016) and the other one developed by Askildson (2005) Morrison (2008), and Pham (2014) were mixed by the

researcher and employed in this study. It is worthy to note that the questionnaire was translated into Persian and the validity and reliability was checked by the researcher. Also, a pilot study was done and the reliability was achieved that was acceptable. The reliability was analyzed by Cronbach's alpha test and reported as 0.82.

Data Collection and Analysis

In conducting the present study, at first, 68 students were selected based on the available sampling to collected data. All of the students enrolled as the elementary ones, but in order to be sure that all are in the same level, Nelson Placement test administered to them. Based on the results, 60 participants (30 girls and 30 boys) whose scores on the language proficiency test fell within the acceptable range of standard deviation and mean score, attended in the present project. After that, the researcher randomly put them in two groups as the control, and experimental groups. Pre-test was administered to all learners and all of the students had to participate in the pre-test. The test included 20 questions of vocabulary. The papers were corrected and the scores were recorded by the researcher. Treatment as the third and one of the most important steps of the research procedure, started after the completion of the pre-test. The treatment implemented in 10 sessions and the timing of each session was 90 minutes. One group consisting of 30 students served as the experimental group, and the other group with the same number of students was regarded as the control group. It should be noted that the experimental group received treatment (teacher sense of humor). On the other hand, control group received teaching vocabulary seriously. After the treatment, the final phase of the present research was conducting a post-test, and all of the students participated in it. The format of post-test which was similar to the pre-test, included vocabulary questions. Eventually, all the papers were corrected and the scores were written next to the pre-test scores for analyzing and identifying the possible differences between the two tests.

Data analysis addressed quantitative data, including pre and posttests along with the questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics along with SPSS version 24 was used. In descriptive statistics section, demographic information of participants (gender and age) as well as research variables were presented using frequency tables. In other words, descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage and mean scores were reported to explore the effectiveness of humor on students' vocabulary knowledge. In the inferential statistics section, Pearson correlation test was used to examine the second research question.

Results

Analyzing Pre and Post-Tests' Scores

According to careful analysis, in both groups, the mean scores have increased in the post-test. However, the difference between the means of the pre and post-test in the experimental group is remarkable. In fact, the mean of the post-test in the experimental group has increased more than the mean score of the control group.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of T-Tests

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control Group	Pre-test	15.45	30	2.35	0.440
	Post-test	15.95	30	2.22	0.400
Experimental Group	Pre-test	15.53	30	2.65	0.498
	Post-test	16.45	30	2.72	0.481

Table 2. Paired Sample T-test

		Paired Differences					df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Con. Group	Pretest Posttest	-0.50	1.31	0.13	-0.79	0.19	-1.24	29	0.23
Exp. Group	Pretest Posttest	-0.92	1.78	0.07	-2.36	-1.03	-5.21	29	0.00

After implementing posttest, the students' scores of the two groups demonstrated the different means. In other words, the means of pre-test and post-test in the control group are 15.45 and 15.95 respectively. The difference between the two means is 0.50, which indicates a slight difference between two means. However, the difference between the mean score of the experimental group is observable. Based on the table, the mean of the pre-test was 15.53, and the mean of the post-test was 16.45 in the experimental group. Thus, the observable difference between the mean scores of the experimental group is clear, which is 0.92.

Descriptive Analysis of Questionnaire

Descriptive statistics analysis was done in order to analyze the items of the related questionnaire from students' views. It should be noted that the questionnaire assessed 24 related items about the effectiveness of teacher's sense of humor on improving vocabulary knowledge of EFL learners. All the items measured in 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". Frequency, percentage and mean of all the statements were analyzed and then, the average of all items is shown in the related table.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistic of Humor Questionnaire

N	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	M
1	I can learn vocabulary better when my language teacher uses humor.	8.33%	15%	6.67%	45%	25%	3.63
2	If my class is laughing and joking, we are learning vocabulary better.	11.67%	13.33%	8.34%	41.66%	25%	3.35
3	Humor in the foreign language increases my interest in learning vocabulary.	6.67%	16.66%	3.34%	38.33%	35%	3.78
4	Humor makes me feel more relaxed (i.e. less anxious) in learning new words.	5%	11.67%	3.33%	50%	30%	3.88
5	Humor in the classroom helps me to concentrate better on new words definition.	13.33%	20%	5%	28.34%	33.33%	3.15

6	The use of humor in learning new words is not distracting.	20%	16.66%	10%	25%	28.34%	3.08
7	I find easy to understand English humor in the classroom.	13.33	13.33	5%	35%	33.34	3.61
8	I would like my teacher to use English humor in teaching	10%	11.65%	8.33%	46.66%	23.36%	3.15
9	Humor generally improves my ability to learn English vocabulary by creating a more comfortable environment overall.	6.67%	13.33%	8.36%	33.32%	38.32%	3.83
10	Teacher's sense of humor in teaching words encourages class attendance.	8.33%	15%	6.67%	45%	25%	3.63
11	Teacher's sense of humor in classroom attracts students' attention to learning vocabulary.	16.67%	13.33%	3.34%	33.33%	33.33%	3.20
12	Students feel relaxed when teachers use humor in teaching new words.	15%	11.66%	1.67%	30%	41.67%	3.71
13	Teacher's sense of humor makes learning new words more enjoyable and alleviates the boredom.	6.67%	8.33%	0%	35%	50%	4.13
14	Teacher's sense of humor helps students to remember the gained vocabulary knowledge.	18.33%	16.67%	0%	31.67%	33.33%	3.45
15	Teacher's sense of humor in teaching vocabulary increases the students' sense of comfort and reduces stress, anxiety and fear.	5%	13.33%	1.67%	51.66%	28.34%	3.85
16	Teacher's sense of humor in class creates a positive environment for learning vocabulary.	16.67%	11.66%	5%	25%	41.67%	3.63
17	Teacher's sense of humor in teaching English words is considered as one of the modern educational methods.	15%	20%	11.67%	35%	18.33%	3.21
18	Teacher's sense of humor motivates students to participate in vocabulary activities.	5%	13.33%	1.67%	51.66%	28.34%	3.85
19	Teacher's use of humor during lessons increases students' understanding of the study materials (new words).	16.67%	13.33%	5%	41.66%	23.34%	3.41
20	Humor is an innovative way of improving students' vocabulary	11.66%	18.34%	3.33%	43.33%	23.34%	3.48

	knowledge.						
21	Using humor by teachers increases students' motivation for learning vocabulary.	13.33 %	13.33 %	0%	26.67 %	46.67%	3.80
22	Teacher's sense of humor is an effective learning tool to teach words which are difficult to comprehend.	20%	16.66 %	5%	35%	23.34%	3.25
23	Students prefer teachers use humor in teaching vocabulary.	15%	13.33 %	10%	40%	21.67%	3.40
24	Using humor during lessons stimulates students' creative work like learning new words.	16.66 %	13.34 %	11.66 %	26.67 %	31.67%	3.43

*SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

The first item analyzed the quality of learning vocabulary by teacher's humor. Descriptive analysis of the table indicates that most of the participants (70%) agreed that they could learn vocabulary better when their language teacher used humor. Descriptive Analysis of the second item revealed that about 67% of the students thought if their class was laughing and joking, they would learn vocabulary better, but 25% of them disagreed, and several (8.34%) had neutral opinion. The third item analyzed the role of humor in increasing students' interest. Based on the above table, about 73.5% of participants believed that humor in the foreign language increased their interest in learning vocabulary. Analysis of item four highlighted a great percentage of students (80%) stated that humor made them feel more relaxed in learning new words. Item five indicated that more than half of respondents (61.67%) mentioned that humor in the classroom helped them to concentrate better on new words definition. Once again, more than half of them (53.34%) believed that the use of humor in learning new words was not distracting (Item 6). Analysis of item seven indicated that about 68.5% of the EFL learners thought that it was easy to understand English words with teacher's sense of humor in the classroom. Based on the information in the above table, nearly 70% of the students would like their teacher to use English humor in teaching vocabulary and most of the students (nearly 72%) uttered that humor generally improved their ability to learn English vocabulary by creating a more comfortable and conducive learning environment overall. Also, exactly 70% of the participants agreed that teacher's sense of humor in teaching words encouraged class attendance and 66.66% showed teachers' sense of humor attracts students' attention to learning vocabulary. Moreover, 71.67% felt relaxed when teachers use humor in teaching new words, and a great percentage (85%) of the EFL learners believed that teacher's sense of humor made learning new words more enjoyable and alleviates the boredom. Once again, a great percentage of the respondents (80%) thought that teacher's sense of humor in teaching vocabulary increased their sense of comfort and reduces stress, anxiety and fear, and more than half (66.67%) of the students stated that teacher's sense of humor in class created a positive environment for learning vocabulary. In addition, half of the subjects (53.33%) declared that teacher's sense of humor in teaching English words can be considered as one of the modern educational methods, and 80% agreed that teacher's sense of humor motivated students to participate in classroom vocabulary activities. The results of this survey revealed that 65% of the students agreed that teacher's use of humor during lessons increased their understanding of the study materials, almost 67% of the EFL learners declared that humor was an innovative way of improving their vocabulary knowledge, and nearly 73.5% of the subjects uttered that using humor by teachers increased their motivation for learning vocabulary. As the analysis of table showed,

more than half of the students (58.5%) of the students considered that teacher's sense of humor was an effective learning tool to teach words which were difficult to comprehend, and almost 62% of the students preferred teachers use humor in teaching vocabulary. Eventually, the results of the last item of the survey indicated that more than half of the participants of this study (about 58%) agreed that using humor during lessons stimulated their creative work like learning new words, but 30% of them disagreed and about 12% had neutral view on the last item.

In addition to the above tables, the following one provided the average of each option. As this table (4.27) indicates "Agree" received the first rank with the highest mean score (37.29). After that, "Strongly Agree" received the second rank with the mean score of 30.90, and "Disagree" placed the third rank with the mean of 14.30. Then, "Strongly Disagree" received the fourth rank with the mean score of 11.43 followed by "Neutral" as the last rank in the table with the lowest mean score (5.21). Therefore, it can be inferred from the following table that most of the students indicated their agreement on the mentioned items of the questionnaire.

Table 4. Mean Scores of the Questionnaire Options

N	Options	Mean Score	Rank
1	Agree	37.29	1 st
2	Strongly Agree	30.90	2 nd
3	Disagree	14.30	3 rd
4	Strongly Disagree	11.43	4 th
5	Neutral	5.21	5 th

Inferential Statistics

After collecting and analyzing the scores of the questionnaire, "Pearson Correlation Test" was employed for finding the possible the difference between the EFL learners' attitudes towards teacher's sense of humor regarding their genders. As the following table (Table 5) highlighted, p-value or sig (2-tailed) is 0.84 which is more than 0.05. Due to the amount of Sig which is more than 0.05 (Sig=0.84>0.05), it can be concluded that there is not any difference between male and female students' views towards the role of teacher's sense of humor in vocabulary development.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Test

Correlation		Questionnaire Scores	Gender
Scores	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.84
	N	60	60
Test	Correlation Coefficient	0.001	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.84	
	N	60	60

Discussion

Q1. What is the effect of teacher's sense of humor on students' learning vocabulary?

Descriptive statistics illustrated the students' improvement in their vocabulary knowledge by treatment that is teacher sense of humor. Based on the related table in control group, the means of students' scores are 15.45 and 15.95 in pre-test and post-test respectively. However, in experimental group the mean of pre-test is 15.53, and the post-test is 16.45. In other words, EFL learners of the experimental group had better performance in vocabulary post-test ($15.95 < 16.45$). Thus, the observable difference between the mean scores of the experimental group is clear, which is 0.92. Findings of the table proved that there was statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group in the pre and post-test. Due to the careful analysis, it can be concluded that teacher's sense of humor had positive effect on students' learning vocabulary.

Q2. To what extent is the EFL learners' attitude positive toward vocabulary knowledge regarding teacher's sense of humor?

The careful analysis of the questionnaire revealed that a great percentage of the students (more than 80%) stated that teacher's sense of humor made learning new words more enjoyable and alleviates the boredom. Moreover, the same percentage of them (80%) believed that teacher's sense of humor in teaching vocabulary increased their sense of comfort and reduces stress, anxiety and fear. Also, humor made them feel more relaxed in learning new words and motivated them to participate in classroom vocabulary activities. Once again, the same percentage of the participants (73.5%) believed that humor increased their interest and motivation in learning vocabulary. In addition, nearly 72% uttered that humor generally improved their ability to learn English vocabulary by creating a more comfortable and conducive learning environment overall. In their words, they felt relaxed when teachers use humor in teaching new words. Once again, the same percentage of the subjects (70%) agreed that they could learn vocabulary better when their language teacher used humor, they encouraged class attendance and would like their teacher to use English humor in teaching vocabulary. Then, data analysis of the survey showed that most of the EFL students (more than 60%) concentrated better on new words definition and understand English words with teacher's sense of humor. Also, it can attract their attention to learning vocabulary, increased their understanding of the study materials, and created a positive environment. They considered it as an innovative way and preferred teachers use humor in teaching vocabulary. Eventually more than half of them (more than 50%) declared that teacher's sense of humor was not distracting. In fact, it was a modern and effective learning tool to teach words which stimulated their creative work like learning new words.

Q3. What is the difference between male and female students' views on learning vocabulary by using teacher's sense of humor?

The current study addressed another question which examined the difference between students' gender on learning vocabulary by using teacher's sense of humor. To do this, Pearson correlation test was used for finding the possible difference between the male and female students' attitudes. As the related table highlighted, p-value or sig (2-tailed) is 0.84 which is more than 0.05. The analysis, the amount of Sig which is more than 0.05 ($\text{Sig}=0.84 > 0.05$), revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female students' views on learning vocabulary by using teacher's sense of humor. Therefore, according to received data, the P-value did not differ between the two genders (male and female EFL teachers of language institute).

The results of the study are in accord with Furrer and Skinner's (2003) study which indicated that teacher's sense of humor can be an influential factor on students' course engagement. Moreover, other research revealed a positive effect of humor in the classroom which assists teachers to gain and retain students' attention and helps students enhance their learning (Benjelloun, 2009; Garner, 2006; Tait et al., 2015). Also, in another empirical study which set out to investigate the use of humor in the university classroom, Benjelloun (2009) found that the students preferred the teachers to use instructional humor as it helped students to pay attention in the class. Furthermore, the outcomes of the study are in line with some previous studies by Wilkins and Eisenbrum (2009), Martin (2007), Lei et al., (2010), Nesi (2012), and Zhao, Kong and Wang (2012), found out that teacher's humor contributes to students' learning motivation in the classroom and leads them to better understanding and level of their attention. Teachers' use of humor may decrease the students' anxiety and stress, and increases their learning motivation. Also, findings of this research are compatible with Worthen, & Deschamps (2008) and Hayati (2011) who investigated the impact of humorous activities on learning and found this trend a positive one. Additionally, the findings of this study are in line with the findings of Banas et al., (2010) and Wanzer et al., (2010). They found that the use of appropriate and relevant humor by teachers, is an effective way to enhance students' learning.

Conclusion and Implications

Using humor as a teaching strategy was evaluated in EFL classroom to see if it influenced retention of material and students' attention and interest to learn English vocabulary. As stated before, a related questionnaire was employed in the present study to find out the effectiveness of teacher's sense of humor on EFL learners' vocabulary improvement, and also the possible difference was assessed between male and female students' views on learning vocabulary by using teacher's sense of humor. The results indicated students' positive views on the role of teacher's sense of humor in developing their vocabulary knowledge in Rafsanjan language institute. That is to say, teacher's sense of humor had positive effect on students' vocabulary knowledge. Also, no difference was observed between male and female students' views on learning vocabulary by using teacher's sense of humor. On the whole, the participants' overall satisfaction towards teacher's sense of humor was achieved by this study. It is worthy to note that the findings of this research can provide the students and teachers with evidence that sense of humor could be used to improve English students' engagement and increase their level of attention in the English classroom by introducing humor into the instruction. On the basis of the findings, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, teacher's use of humor in teaching is effective and students admire it. Second, it causes to reduce their anxieties in the classroom, stimulates their thoughts, and increases their interest in learning vocabulary. Third, humor generally improves students' ability to learn English vocabulary by creating a more comfortable and conducive learning environment. Then, using humor that is related to the teachers' effectiveness in teaching, the students generally try to do well in the subsequent subjects, because they are motivated, they find the lessons engaging, so their anxiety about the subjects would be reduced, but their thoughts and interests would be stimulated. As a result, they can find the positive relationship with their teachers. Eventually, the teachers who employ humor in teaching, prefer to be rated moderately high in terms of students' motivation, and lead to foster the positive relationship between their students with an affective learning.

Numerous research has been carried out in the area of general pedagogical impacts of humor on some variables in the English classrooms. The role of pedagogical humor in the classroom is deeply multifaceted, and needs investigation and analysis from different views. Although there are some doubts in concerning the benefits of humor in the classroom, the

experimental evidence and a lot of literature in this area has generally acknowledged remarkable advantages to the pedagogical usage of humor. The findings of the present study can accept such perceived advantages. Besides, the effective advantages of humor would seem to be ideally applicable to such a context, by giving the special importance of lowering the affective filter in the classroom. Moreover, some studies also regarded the role for humor as an illustrative tool for targeted learning context. Therefore, decision-makers and pedagogical researchers have force to the concept of humor as both a pedagogical tool and a natural component to provide in all other facets of life. The largely supportive attitudes of students in the present study can serve as further emphasis for such a need. Totally, all the mentioned benefits make humor as a useful and supportive teaching tool that can be used in the foreign language classroom. If humor used appropriately and with care, it can help to improve both teaching and learning processes, and leads to a positive classroom atmosphere which the participants involved emotionally and mentally. Accordingly, teachers require to set time in order to develop strategies and apply humor in their own teaching practice for improving their students. However, teachers should regard and know the role of humor not only in the target language as a pedagogical tool in the foreign language classrooms, but also in the students' personal enhancement.

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