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## Using Humor in Virtual Classroom: Lecturer's Perspective

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### Abstract

The pandemic of Covid-19 affects a variety of facets, including the way education is delivered, which has shifted to an online format via the use of virtual classrooms supplied by several platforms. The purpose of this study is to ascertain lecturers' attitudes about the incorporation of comedy in virtual classrooms. A 14-question closed-ended questionnaire was issued online via Google Form. The questions fall into three categories: humor integration into the learning process, comedy and its influence on students, and lecturer-supplied humor content. A Likert scale was used to create the questionnaire. SPSS was used to analyse and evaluate the data statistically. A more extensive response was gathered through an interview with the subject, who was randomly selected depending on their agreement. The findings indicate that lecturers believe humor is vital in the classroom and can be used as a teaching method. Additionally, they feel that incorporating humor into the teaching-learning process can increase student participation, enthusiasm, comfort, and motivation, as well as garner respect and a favorable attitude toward lecturers. Regarding the material or subject matter utilized to perform humor, the lecturers feel that delicate topics (pornography, religion, sexuality, and political choice), the students' cultural background, and the lesson taught at the time must all be considered. As a result, it can be recommended that comedy can be used as a substitute for relieving pressure and boredom during online learning sessions.

*Keywords:* humor; virtual; classroom; lecturer

### 1. Introduction

The pandemic of Covid-19 affects a variety of facets, including the way education is delivered, which has shifted to an online format via the use of virtual classrooms supplied by several platforms. Due to the policy proposed by the ministry of education and culture of Indonesia, teaching-learning process in all levels (elementary, junior, senior, and tertiary) is conducted through online platform. This has purpose to avoid infection and minimize the effect of covid-19 pandemic.

Online learning also has its problems. Those must be faced by students as well as the teachers and lecturers. The troubles happen such as unstable signal that disturbs the condition. It has effect to the boredom of teacher and students. One solution to overcome and kill the boredom is through humor. This is backed by Bakar [1], which demonstrates how humor may be used to improve student learning and for social goals such as building rapport, fostering group cohesion, and retaining students' attention.

Humor is a phenomenon that exists in human life. Humor is also associated with acts of verbal communication that require a very simple narrative structure [2] and with the expected meaning of speech or violation of expected conversational practices [3]. According to some scientists, humor is a mental state that results in complicated neurophysiological symptoms of laughter [4]. Because humor is intended to entertain [5], it also necessitates that human beings be capable of producing and interpreting amusing and intriguing events when "humor" occurs, and whatever occurs must be amusing and serve as a stimulus for others to be entertained [6], [7]. Although humour causes people to laugh or grin [8], it is also subjective [1]. Once a humorous item is given, it is possible that no one will laugh. Laughter and a sense of humor are inextricably linked. As a result, comedy is multifaceted, with numerous classifications based on varying standards.

Humor can be distinguished into some categories. Based on its function, it is categorized into positive and negative humor [9]. The other experts propose other ways to differ it based on appropriateness. Humor can be regarded to be appropriate humor and inappropriate humor [10]. In educational contexts, humor can be defined as lecturer-student teasing, lecturer error, lecturer self-deprecation, black humour, disparaging out-group members, and register and wordplay [11].

The incorporation of humor in classroom has attracted scholars' attention. Many researchers have conducted studies such humor and teaching grammar [12]. Referring to the context of higher education, it is done by [1]. The exploration of humor in classroom setting has been done based on students' perspective [13], [14], meanwhile based on lecturer's perspective was done by [15]. As such, this study aims to reflect lecturers' perspectives on the incorporation of comedy in virtual classrooms.

**2. Methods**

This study is an attempt to analyze humor as one of the genres of language use. This study is done qualitatively by observing the phenomena of using humor in society. The data for this study are taken from several sources, such as a collection of humor, social media, and the use of humor in public places. The analysis of the data is done by applying referential and distributional methods (Sudaryanto, 2018). Analysis of data is also done by exploring the structure of the meaning of text projected as humor. Besides, lexical configuration and logical construction in the structure of the text of humor are also considered.

A 14-question closed-ended questionnaire was issued online via Google Form. The questions fall into three categories: humor integration into the learning process, comedy and its influence on students, and lecturer-supplied humor content. As shown in Table 1, the questionnaire was formatted using the Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1).

Table 1. List of Questions

No	Statement
1	I think that humor can be incorporated in my virtual classroom.
2	I got training to incorporate humor in my lecture.
3	I prepare to incorporate humor in my lecture.
4	I think humor can be used as teaching strategy.
5	I think that using humor in virtual classroom makes the students more interactive.
6	I think that using humor in virtual classroom will make the students more comfortable.
7	I think that using humor in virtual classroom will increase students' enthusiasm in learning.
8	I think that using humor in virtual classroom will never make me lose respect from students.
9	By using humour in classroom, students will get motivated.
10	By using humour in classroom, students will experience positive attitude.
11	I am confident to use humor in my lecture.
12	I avoid incorporating humour in my lecture which is about sensitive thing (pornography, religion, sexuality, and political choice).
13	I incorporate humour in my lecture by considering the lesson learned at that time.
14	I insert humour in my lecture by considering cultural background of my students.

The data were processed and analyzed statistically using SPSS in order to determine the mean, median, and mode. A more extensive response to support the analysis and conclusions was collected through an interview with the participant who was randomly selected depending on their consent.

**3. Result and Discussion**

There are 33 respondents from 5 universities in North Sumatera, Indonesia have participated in this research. Based on the analysis, it was found that the mean of the score is 56.27. Meanwhile, median and modus are successively 57, and 4. It means that the respondents dominantly agree with the statement in the questionnaire.

I think that humor can be incorporated in my virtual classroom

33 tanggapan

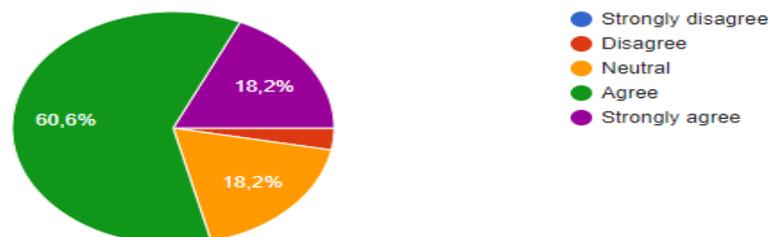


Figure 1. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 1

Figure 1 shows that the dominant answer given by participant is *Agree* that humor can be incorporated in my virtual classroom. There is one participant choosing the option *disagree*. This is reasonable since [16] report that some teachers do not incorporate humour in second language education is because teachers are not trained to use humor in classroom setting. This fact is supported by statement number 2 as presented below.

I got training to incorporate humor in my lecture

33 tanggapan



Figure 2. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 2

“During our study in bachelor degree, one of the lectures we got is educational psychology. I still remember that my lecturer stated that humor is important in classroom to decrease the tension. Then, in micro teaching subject, we were trained to plan humor incorporation during the teaching-learning process and it must be adjustable with the material.” (Participant 12)

I prepare to incorporate humor in my lecture

33 tanggapan

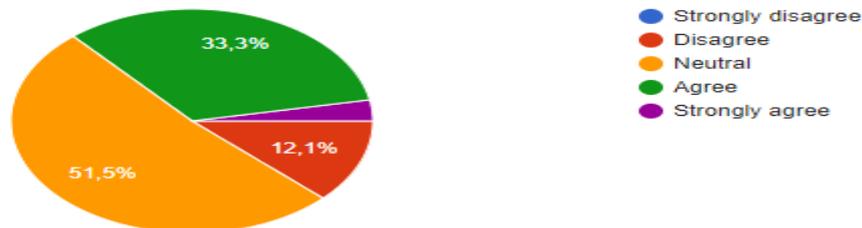


Figure 3. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 3

Figure 3 shows that the respondents dominantly choose *neutral*. Then, it is followed by the choice of *agree*. It means that most of respondents are not sure whether they prepare to incorporate humor or not in the lecture.

I think humor can be used as teaching strategy

33 tanggapan



Figure 4. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 4

Referring to figure 4, the lecturers dominantly answered *agree* totaling to 57.6%. It means that they agree that humor can be used as teaching strategy in virtual classroom. There is no participant selecting *disagree* or *strongly disagree* options

Related to statement 5, it deals with humor and students' interactivity in virtual class. The majority of respondents totaling to 45.5% agree with this statement. One of the respondents states that:

“During online learning via zoom, I normally use humor as teaching strategy to achieve the objective of the lesson. I can attract and trigger students to be focused related to the materials given at that day”. (Participant 30)

. The description could be seen in figure 5.

I think that using humor in virtual classroom makes the students more interactive

33 tanggapan



Figure 5. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 5

I think that using humor in virtual classroom will make the students more comfortable

33 tanggapan

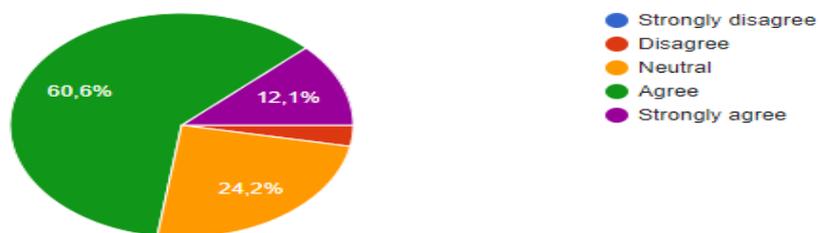


Figure 6. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 6

Figure 6 depicts that the respondents answer *agree* as the dominant choice totaling to 60.6%. The interesting finding is that there is respondent answered *disagree*. This is possible to happen since there is a belief that teaching as something that should be done seriously to achieve the objectives of teaching.

I think that using humor in virtual classroom will increase students' enthusiasm in learning

33 tanggapan

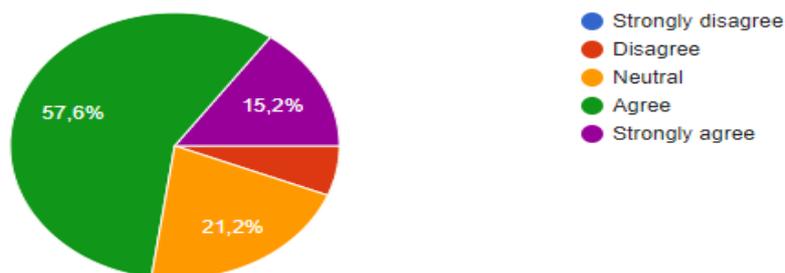


Figure 7. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 7

Figure 7 shows that dominantly, the respondents *agree* with this statement. It is represented by the percentage totaling to 57.6%. This is also consistent with [15], which states that humor can help students feel more at ease during the teaching-learning process, foster positive interactions, result in a more enthusiastic teaching-learning process, increase student attendance, and decrease the number of students who feel sleepy during class.

I think that using humor in virtual classroom will never make me lose respect from students

33 tanggapan

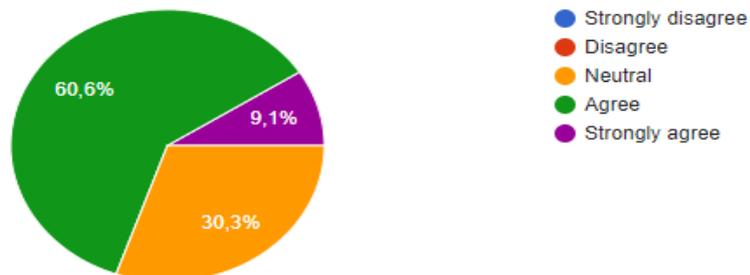


Figure 8. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 8

In relation to lecturers' face, the respondents believe that incorporating humor in virtual classroom will never make them lose respect from students. It is represented by the percentage totaling to 60.6%. Sense of humor is also needed since a good sense of humour is one of the characteristics of an effective teacher [17].

By using humour in classroom, students will get motivated

33 tanggapan

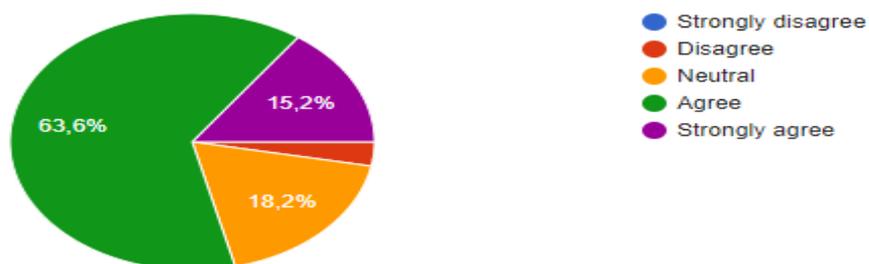


Figure 9. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 9

Figure 9 deals with humor utilization and students' motivation. The majority of respondents *agree* with this statement. This can be concluded that humor can trigger the motivation in learning. Facing the computer all day brings boredom and tiredness. If the lecturer can enhance students' motivation, the class will be interesting.

By using humour in classroom, students will experience positive attitude

33 tanggapan



Figure 10. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 10

Figure 10 exposes the respondents' answer. The dominant answer given by respondents is *agree* totaling to 48.5%. The other interesting finding is the *neutral* option also has significant percentage totaling to 45.5%. It can be inferred that the lecturers have belief that students' positive attitude can be generated by using humor in virtual class.

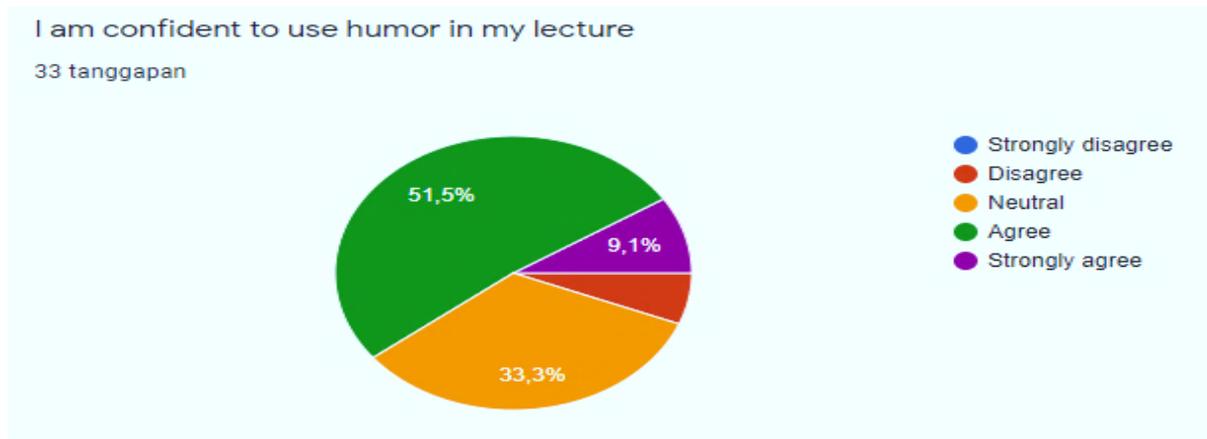


Figure 11. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 11

Figure 11 provides the answer related to respondents' confidence in using humor in their lecture. The representation is 51.5 % of respondent answered *agree* followed successively by *neutral*, *strongly agree*, and *neutral*. This can be inferred that the respondents feel easy to incorporate humor in their virtual classroom.

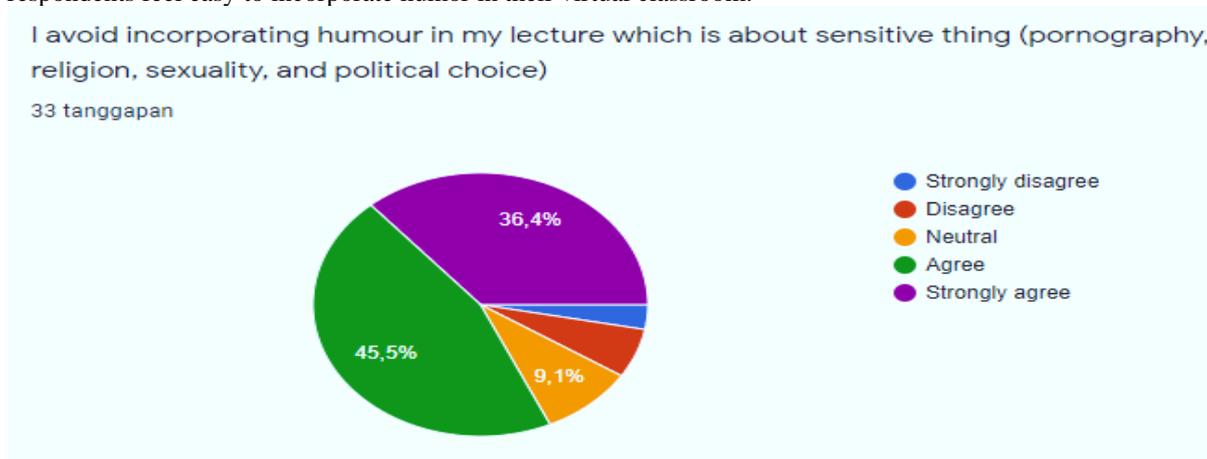


Figure 12. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 12

I insert humour in my lecture by considering cultural background of my students  
33 tanggapan

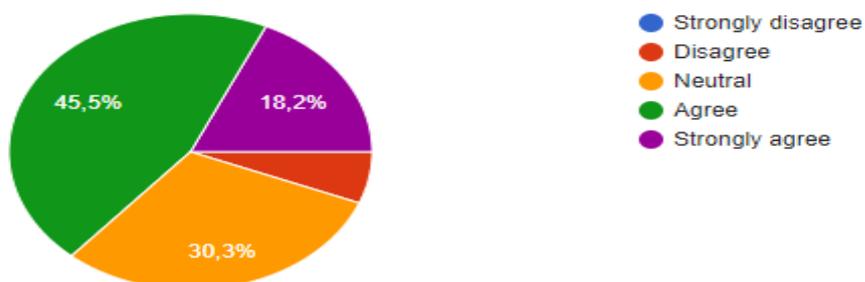


Figure 13. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 13

### I insert humour in my lecture by considering cultural background of my students

33 tanggapan

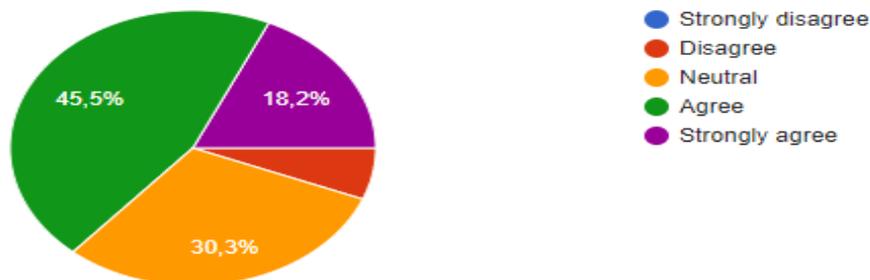


Figure 14. Respondents' Answer for Statement Number 14

Figures 12, 13, and 14 are concerned with the material or subject matter on which humor is performed. According to the lecturers, delicate topics (pornography, religion, sexuality, and political choice), students' cultural background, and lessons acquired at the time must all be examined in order to avoid misunderstandings or even hate speech, as one respondent remarked.

"We should be careful in using humor in virtual class since it is easily recorded. The recording is an authentic proof. I always avoid and consider to use appropriate joke rather than pornography, religion, sexuality, or political choices. Currently, Medan is going to hold *Pilkada*. The use of Jargon should be avoided in order to keep the neutrality as civil servant and avoid hate speech". (Participant 16)

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestion

The findings indicate that lecturers believe humor is vital in the classroom and can be used as a teaching method. Additionally, they feel that incorporating humor into the teaching-learning process can increase student participation, enthusiasm, comfort, and motivation, as well as garner respect and a favorable attitude toward lecturers. Regarding the material or subject matter utilized to perform humor, the lecturers feel that delicate topics (pornography, religion, sexuality, and political choice), the students' cultural background, and the lesson taught at the time must all be considered. Thus, humor inclusion may be seen as a means of alleviating strain and monotony during online learning sessions.

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