

# Blending Humour and Animation in English Learning for Students of English Education Programs in Universities

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Most pedagogical approaches lay particular stress on inculcating knowledge while ignoring the significance of students' learning skills, interests, attitudes and confidence. Therefore, most students consider English learning as examination-oriented. Humour and animation can accommodate learning styles and enhance students' perceptions of the lesson being presented. Unfortunately, the fact is that the use of humour and animation in language teaching classes in our place does not draw enough attention. Thus, the new teaching and learning approach has not been widely applied. This study used both qualitative as well as quantitative methods to collect data. The qualitative methods included class observation, interviews, teaching material selection, analysis and animation video. The quantitative method focused on class project results. Sixty students of the English Education Department of Indraprastha PGRI Jakarta in their third semester 2019 were chosen in this study. The results of the survey clearly show that students' projects, which were taught utilising humour and animation, achieved better results. The results were exposed to contextualised language through the implementation of fun in animation. It indicates that there are potential benefits involved in the application of this new learning and teaching methodology, that is can enrich students' vocabularies, lead to an increase in comprehension of the contexts in animation, create new animation styles, and, therefore, more attention should be paid to this issue in the future.

**Keywords:** *Humour, Animation, English Learning.*

## Introduction

Learning English is a complex skill. It may seem so, as English is our second language. Learning a foreign language is a general expression used to refer to the appropriation of a language apart from the mother language, and this learning can be generated in different

contexts, including two in particular: the first one, in which the foreign language is socially dominant, and the second one, in which the foreign language is not widely used in the students' immediate social surrounding (Escobar Fandiño, Muñoz, & Silva Velandia, 2019). But in truth, there are several complex cognitive processes that are involved. Effective teaching-learning processes relate to vocabulary, grammar and the four language skills. These processes include using context to understand what is being said or written, making inferences and linking points together, for example. Teachers are burdened with too little time, too many students in the class and high-paced curriculums that emphasise vocabulary and grammar - both carefully tested and measured, at the expense of real opportunities for communication. As a result, many students share a common deficit. Despite passing the required standards, many lack the fluency to carry on a meaningful conversation. Learning English continues to be perceived as an academic subject, not a lifelong skill. Students focus on strategies for passing tests, not on strategies for productive communication.

Nunan (Abuzahra, Farrah, & Zalloum, 2018) has acknowledged that second language learners must be exposed to authentic learning material because it motivates them through making the interconnection between the content of that authentic material and the topic which is being discussed. Also, it enables learners to connect between the learning atmosphere in the classroom and the real world. Various audio-visual learning instruments have the potential to be employed as sources of authentic language input, such as TV programs, videos or cartoons. Animated cartoons as a source of authentic audio-visual material has proven its effectiveness in second language learning acquisition.

Fortunately, several current trends in educational technology offer the opportunity to break this impasse and provide real change. These trends have emerged as leading educators consider what students need to be successful in the new global information age. Moreover, technology has received more and more attention in the past years because of its capacity for the integrated presentation of visual, auditory and textual information. A picture speaks a thousand words. It represents digital pictures, such as animation, which is not static but dynamic. Therefore, pedagogical strategies and learning objectives are changing in response to the way they are presented digitally in the classroom. Previous research explains that the motivation to learn English as a foreign language, using virtual methodologies (CALL) can be a complicated process (Escobar Fandiño et al., 2019). Technology through animation gives more access and experiences with it in English -learning process, for it can play a significant role in the classroom. Nevertheless, it has to be used in a carefully considered manner to provide students with a more natural and more efficient way to produce with English. It should also help students perform tasks that would be more difficult to complete without the affordances the technology animation offers.

According to Aboudan (Fata, Komariah, & Irfandy, 2018), humour is essential for teaching and learning to motivate and attract students' attention. Mary (Fata et al., 2018) defined that humour has many benefits such as maximising brainpower, contributing to mind or body balance,

improving creativity, facilitating communication and creating an optimal environment for teaching and learning. There are several reasons why not many teachers employ humour in their class. They believe that humour seems too personal for the classroom, where there is a group of individuals with different views of humour. Hence, they fear they might simply insult someone. Another reason is that some people see the use of humour as something that could lead to discipline problems, and, as a consequence, to the teacher's loss of control of the class. Some argue that humour is time-consuming, that it increases teacher's talking time and could raise learner dependence. Another common reason is scepticism in the seriousness of humour (Margoob, 2017).

Check (Syafiq, 2012) Teachers' effective use of humour is generally viewed as a positive factor in the classroom. It may even influence the effectiveness of college teacher power and compliance-gaining strategies. Teachers have the most influence on the learners. They can create a learning environment filled with positive attitudes, creativity and one that is fun through the use of humour. Humour gives learners a breather that allows them to regain their strength and pull their resources together. Humour makes learners look confident, assertive and objective. It provides an alternative view, gives new insight and possible solutions to problems (Chabeli, 2008). Using humour in the classroom is rational because a method of humour can improve the ability of vocabulary (your words), grammar and wording (composition) (Wahyuni & Naim, 2019). Humour can help a person avoid excessive boredom, reduce stress, anxiety and fear and improve mood and confidence. Humour creates a relaxed atmosphere where learning can be enhanced, appreciated and enjoyed. When learners are relaxed, thinking becomes eminent. But, from a teaching perspective, using humour as a learning method in English learning, especially in our classrooms, is not a standard teaching tool or teaching techniques. Through humour, the teacher's characteristics come to the fore. The motivation, approachability, enthusiasm, passion for the subject and expert knowledge and experience will be displayed by the ability to infuse humour into the content by formulating examples using humour so that learners remember more readily - i.e., relating the learner's preconceptions to the knowledge. Humour increases the teacher's coaching, facilitating and guiding abilities. It increases the teacher's critical and reflective skills (Chabeli, 2008)

Humour can be used to promote student-teacher interaction and to increase the quantity and quality of student talking time. This can also encourage learner responsibility and autonomy and may be more relaxing than running back and forth between the units of a course book. Through the use of humour, students may practice three skills: listening, speaking and reading, and the whole atmosphere in the class is relaxed. So, implementation of jokes into a unit randomly may help teachers create a more appealing atmosphere (Ashton-hay & Pillay, 2010). Maurice (Ashton-hay & Pillay, 2010) emphasises "Humour can easily be seen as a way of activating motivation and directing attention, but it can also be used in other events as well, from stimulating recall to eliciting performance and providing feedback." Humour can be described as a frank attitude for teachers, and the National Education Association extols that humour fuels engagement and helps students learn (Huss, 2016).



From the perspective of an educational psychologist, the teacher's use of humour can be seen to possess a dual-advantage for it has proved to influence student learning in two ways: on the one hand, humour works as an attention-getter, which directly stimulates and affects the student's mental capacities responsible for memory and learning. Thus, humour becomes both an effective memory aid and an important learning tool for the students. On the other hand, as a trigger of amusement and laughter, humour works not only as a student motivator but also creates a more relaxed and positive classroom atmosphere, which in turn is beneficial for learning (Wahyuni S, 2017). Humour has been touted as an excellent way for students to learn vocabulary, syntax, semantics and discourse conventions of the target language, as well as to gain insight into the culture of those who speak that language. In order to help language instructors make sense of humour and select appropriate examples to use in their classrooms, researchers have put forth typologies of humour and made recommendations for the proper levels of learners with which each type might be used (Bell, 2009).

According to the results of research conducted by Akinkurolere (2013), a careful investigation of ESL teachers' perception on the use of humour in English language teaching is recommended in order to allow a comparative analysis of students' and teachers' perceptions. Azizinezhad & Hashemi (2011) said that many studies show that using humour and laughter can have a calming, positive effect on the mind of the language learners and serve to remove the psychological barriers in the process of better language learning. This effectiveness is particularly relevant to the communicative language teaching classroom, as humour has been shown to lower the affective filter and stimulate the pro-social behaviours that are so necessary for success within a communicative context. Humour not only provides an ideal mode of instruction for discrete linguistic aspects of language, but it is also a powerful instrument for the illustration of cultural, pragmatic and discourse patterns. Humour strengthens the relationship between student and teacher, reduces stress, makes a course more interesting, and, if relevant to the subject, may even enhance recall of the material.

Learner content creation and independent control over the pace of information practiced, with linguistic production of content via the creation of animations with staging, screenwriting and narration can see participants develop increased content engagement, affirm and practice grammar skills and inspire greater speaking confidence (Kent, 2016). Previous research explains that when children learn English via multimedia animations, their memory of vocabulary of multimedia animations with rich contextual cues is better than those with limited contextual cues, and the interactive effect of contextual cues and support requirements is not significant (Wenxin & Kekang, 2009). Animation is being used in a growing number of applications in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics education communities because it provides a visualisation tool that helps student learning. Animation with story narration interests students and helps them to be more impressed with their knowledge. Pleasant characters also improve the willingness of students to learn (Lee & Hao, 2015).

The concept cartoons help students to question their thoughts, solve the problems they encounter in their everyday lives, broaden their horizons and provide different perspectives for the events. They are funny and non-offensive, enjoyable material which gives a memorable experience to everybody. By having a comic strip with proper messages and by adding humour to the topic, a teacher can reach everybody very easily (Marius, Sèna, & Kodjo, n.d.).

According to Rosdalina and the team (Rosdalina, Pipit Rahayu, 2014), animation movies as media were helpful to the teaching and learning process, made the students motivated and they were actively involved in a speaking activity. Animation movies as media helped the students develop better activities in students. There are claims about the advantage of using animation over traditional paper-based explanation. Lowe suggested that animations have the potential to serve both affective function and cognitive function. Emotional service refers to portraying things in a humorous, spectacular or bizarre way so that learners will be attracted to pay additional attention to the learning materials and motivated to learn (Hwang, Tam, Lam, & Lam, 2012).

Handayani (2017), the previous researchers, uses an animated film entitled “Avatar The Legend of Aang.” The reasons for choosing the movie are because of its content, clear pronunciation and duration. For the first reason, the contents of the film are entertaining since the characters are mostly teenagers and there is always humour in every act. The second reason is the film has a clear pronunciation. With this, the students will be able to follow the words said by the characters through available script text. The last reason is the duration. It does not take a long time. Unlike any other animated-films, this film only takes twenty-three minutes to play. This also will save time and decrease students’ tediousness due to a long duration.

Barak et al. (Chan, 2015) found that students who use animations to learn have higher motivation in self-efficacy, enjoyment, connection to daily life and realising the importance of their future compared to those who do not use animation. Other studies, according to Fralinger & Owens (Chan, 2015), indicated that animation could be an icebreaker to initiate class discussion and facilitate engaging, interactive and even entertaining lectures without putting in a tremendous amount of work and time spent on teaching preparation.

In other research, firstly, it is essential for the teachers who want to use animated video in teaching English to build an active situation towards the use of animated video in teaching reading. Secondly, for the researchers in a similar field of study, it is suggested to investigate other language skills, such as listening, speaking and writing. Besides, studying the different levels of using animated video is required (Khalidiyah, 2015). Teaching vocabulary by using animation videos can help young students to improve their ability to enhance vocabulary (Nagy, 2018).

In other research, an animation video can be made as a medium in teaching listening. The students will not get bored in the learning process because the video is such an exciting medium that provides audio and visual that can grab the students’ interest. The teacher should consider



animation videos in teaching listening because it is easy to understand the story by watching the animation videos, which provides audio and visual (Mustikanthi, 2014). It is concluded that animations may assist students in learning vocabulary, but it is essential to know how and where to decide using them. The animation should not be allowed to monopolise the whole session. On the contrary, it should be considered as a motivator and powerful tool that aids the learning process (Kayaoğlu, Dağ Akbaş, & Öztürk, 2011).

Animation is a media that is great for teaching listening to students. Teachers should be selective in choosing appropriate media for the students. The use of animation movies will create a comfortable classroom and it does not make students feel bored. Moreover, the students should always be active in the teaching-learning process and they should not be afraid of making mistakes when they participate in the teaching-learning process. They also should keep their motivation in learning English and pay more attention to the explanation of the teacher during the teaching-learning process. For parents, they should support their children to learn language by providing DVD/VCD or watching TV of English animation movies at home (Putri, Kasim, & Silvianti, 2017).

In short, blending humour in animation by providing precious English recourses such as songs and stories that are presented in a mixed format of the text, pictures, animations and videos, students are encouraged to seek, discover, create and learn enthusiastically in this process. Visual support, such as videos and photographs with funny themes are used to explain the content. Comprehension is encouraged through illustrations or vivid narrations and colourful images in the context of a sentence. Students also use their receptive skills of listening and reading to build their vocabulary. However, the other animation resources have minimal contextual cues, so they cannot provide much help to students to effectively understand the contents of humour in animation resources and learn target vocabulary that students have difficulty in learning. This focus of this study was on blending humour and animation that have the potential to create creative, innovative and fun English learning strategies using animation projects to communicate ideas and opinions effectively.

## **Methods**

This study used both qualitative as well as quantitative methods to collect data. The study was based on the projects which were planned and designed for the purpose. Sixty students of the English Education Department of Indraprasta PGRI Jakarta in their third semester during March 2019 were chosen in this study. The students were studying the same English course but were in two different classes: 30 of them were in class A, and the other 30 were in class B.

In class A, 24 were women, and 6 were men; class B students consisted of 23 women and 7 men. The project results were composed of ten categories about humour and the use of animation in English language teaching-learning processes in the classrooms.

## Results and Discussion

Students, in this study, did the projects on blending humour in animation into their learning English classes with their confidence, creativity and participation. Students also submitted the projects about humour in animation becoming part of their English learning and its effect on the classroom atmosphere. Here are the findings:

The results illustrated that more students are in favour of humour in the English classroom than against. 87% of students pointed out that humour helps them with vocabulary as shown in projects 1 and 83% in plan 3. Blending humour in animation when learning difficult material like writing and reviewing shown in projects 2, 4, 5, and 7 indicated that jokes in semantic and grammar help them pay more attention during class time and increased their level of concentration in language skills processes. And, in projects 6, 8, 9, and 10 100% were in favour of using humour in animation periodically to create their animation video. These parts of projects were shown that students used humour in verbal humour and non-verbal humour. Verbal humour is described as using language in a lively, implicit and wise way to trigger laughter and exert a subtle rhetorical effect. While non-verbal humour mainly means laughter-provoking images and actions. For instance, the most typical humorous images are cartoons such as caricatures, political satires, science fiction comics, etc. Picture in animation is a silent and entertaining art. Our students loved using a sketch in making their advertisement. They had a lot of fun when they wrote important notices creatively. The way they handled the words expressed their creativity and knowledge. Humour in animation is the right style of communication, and it can promote interpersonal interaction, collaboration and produce praise.

In comparison, only 25% of students believed humour did not affect increased creativity levels in writing the reports and persuasive texts in projects 2 and 5. Similarly, when blending humour in animation, only 8% claimed that humour does not help in learning writing film reviews or explaining ideas, and only sometimes boosts their attention. If the problematic materials were straight delivered to learners, everything could be seen in a glance without any effort of thinking and it would be difficult for learners to get a better effect. Therefore, in teaching activities, teachers may often need the different styles of languages to communicate the contents by using metaphor, exaggeration, parallelism and other rhetorical devices to create humour to gain a significant teaching effect. More specifically, teachers' real intention should be placed on the deeper side of their sentences, not the surface of it. And students should try to figure out the hidden meaning of their teachers. Besides, the lack of using animation in these parts meant humour didn't work.

Furthermore, when the effect of different types of humour on an understanding of difficult English material was analysed, semantic humour was shown to be more effective than grammatical humour but less effective than vocabulary humour. More specifically, projects of difficult semantic concepts were made more accessible by the use of humour in animation. Other projects of delicate vocabulary items became more comfortable, and grammar concepts



used in creative projects showed a direct positive relation between the level of difficulty of material delivered and the students' preferential extent of humour use – the more difficult the material, the more humour is preferred: 54.2% preferred to have humour when the content is challenging, 4.8% preferred humour to accompany slightly tricky stuff, and most of them preferred to have humour with material that is not difficult at all.

The results reflect on humour in animation as a positive teaching media that creates a fun and relaxed environment with less authoritarianism on the teachers' part and less of a stress on the students'. With such a media well used, teachers in general could successfully facilitate the learning and teaching setting. In other words, blending humour in animation should be used when the learning process requires humour as a 'teaching' strategy. The media improved the students language skills significantly and their digital literacy innovatively. It has been proved that humour has a particular influence on students' literacy skills and mind. It was shown clearly that the new words they studied in humorous ways and the storytelling behind the animations improved memory. For instance, in the process of displaying presentations, the presenters showed the class some funny and ridiculous expressions of people when they were saying their quotes, jokes, riddles or other contents. One of them was the animation of Sule and Andre, the famous comedians, which made all of the students burst out laughing. They laughed and felt curious when they saw the different style of the comedians' images in animation. An example: Sule: "One day Indonesia will be corruption free", which tense is it? Andre: "Future Impossible Tense".

Meanwhile, students got a deeper understanding of how to figure out the meaning of the sentences. In this way, witty use of humour in the classroom can add new words to their vocabulary (including 'corruption'), enhance their digital literacy using animation with images of real people turned into a cartoon and open up their mind. And at the same time, the components of humour stimulates students' interest in learning. After the presentation, the teacher used humorous ways to teach the vocabulary part. Then, students learnt the connection between the content and people's expressions, as well as the relation between the image expressions displayed and other human feelings (such as angry, sad, happy, tempt, fear, surprising), ideas and opinions through reading, writing material and animation presentations. We can say that humour as one of the teaching media is the way of using funny language and visualised techniques to encourage or inspire students to think and improve their skills while laughing.

Most teachers indicated that they used humour to establish a positive classroom atmosphere, to motivate students and to help students feel more comfortable, while at the same time, teachers expressed that humour could be a distraction in the classroom and detrimental to learning (Lovorn & Holaway, 2015).

Besides, humour shades into fancy and imagination, since it is concerned, as they are, with exploring the possibilities of unlikely situations or collaborations of creative ideas, but differs



from them in being concerned only with the laughable aspects of these imagined situations. Richness of imagination used in blended humour and animation in the teaching process boosted the student's more unusual ideas, gave a new perspective on using the language and explore the ideas into concepts and contexts digitally. An interesting humorous pedagogical is used by teachers to make the teaching process more entertaining according to the varied methods, strategies, projects and the individual characteristic of students approaching. As we can see in the assorted projects above, teachers should be creative, innovative and have a sense of humour to create the ideas of projects and materials as well. In this way, delightful teachers play a significant role in stimulating the overall quality of their students. All the excellent teachers are lovely.

Keogh and Naylor (Abuzahra et al., 2018) first believe that the utilisation of cartoons as an educational tool has an immediate impact in the classroom. Both wanted to encourage teachers to use a purposeful and practical approach of influence in the school. It has been emphasised that the concept of using cartoons in the second language learning processes offers several developments, such as a shift from negatively-worded to positively-worded statements and a transfer from the usage of single alternatives to multiple alternatives.

In general, animation videos can be used as media in teaching speaking. In this research, it can be concluded that animation videos can be used in education speaking. Based on the results above, teaching with the use of animation video was effective in improving students speaking and students' motivation in expressing ideas orally Keyms (2016).

## **Conclusion**

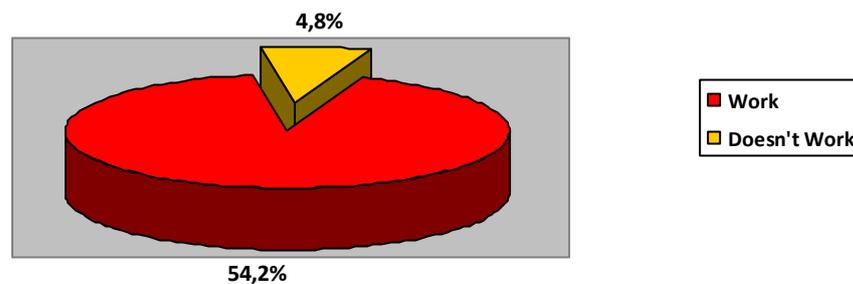
This research focuses on selected issues of learning projects, animation and humour – mainly, students' views about the use of linguistics humour and the impact of humour in animation on the language teaching sets being practical and fun. Blending humour in animation should be used as a teaching technique because it makes lectures more interesting and it encourages students to take part and express opinions, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity. Moreover, students know that humour in animation not only has a positive effect on learning English but also that it reduces their stress.

In other research, overall findings have shown that animated stories may serve as essential tools to contextualise the target items of language in natural and meaningful ways not only with their stable text structures but also with the visual and audio stimuli they provide. Also, they could serve as a background and starting point for the follow-up activities, giving children the chance to practice the language in contexts linked to the story themes. Last but not least, they could help to create a more relaxed and enjoyable learning environment (Yıldırım & Pınar Torun, 2014). Using short cartoon movies is an alternative technique in teaching speaking to senior high school students where the students watch a short cartoon movie at the beginning of the lesson and then retell the story in pairs. It is a good strategy that can be applied by the teachers

because it provides some advantages. The use of cartoon movies can help the students to understand more and memorise the story before they are going to retell the story in front of the class. It is because cartoon movies are an enjoyable and exciting media that create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom (Anggraini, 2016).

Therefore, we suggest that blending humour in animation should become a whole part of any positive learning classroom environment that teachers and students hope to achieve. Along with encouragement, it should be one of the many useful media used by language teachers to make their classrooms more fun, proactive and conducive to learn.

Animation has been regarded as an appealing method of teaching and is considered as a tool that can make learning more fun. Learners also find this material to be more exciting and motivating (Marashi & Adiban, 2017).



**Figure 1. The Effect of Blending Humour in Animation**

**Table 1. The Blending Humour in Animation of Students' Projects**

No	Projects Criteria	English Material	Blending Humour in Animation	Technology Tool	Works	Doesn't work	Total
1.	Classify the authors and their literature	Literature in English Period	People Animation/cartoon	Graphic organizer	52	8	60
2.	Write product outline	Persuasive text	Product sale	Presentation	45	15	60
3.	Naming Product/service	Descriptive text	Animation product/service	Vivid images / narration	50	10	60
4.	Explain ideas/concept	Descriptive text	Animation product / service	Vivid images / narration	55	5	60

5.	Explain what happens in special event	Report text	Story	Presentation	45	15	60
6.	Comic strip	Recount Text	Comic	Comic presentation	60	-	60
7.	Review film	Report text	Compare & Contrast	Presentation	55	5	60
8.	Odd advertisement	Descriptive text	Unusual notice	Short video animation	60	-	60
9.	Create Tutorial Video	Procedure Text	Cooking	Video animation	60	-	60
10.	Create your funny story	Narrative Text	Funny animation	Video animation	60	-	60

**Table 2. Percentage of Works and Doesn't Work**

No.	Works (%)	Doesn't Work (%)
1	87	13
2	75	25
3	83	17
4	92	8
5	75	25
6	100	0
7	92	8
8	100	0
9	100	0
10	100	0



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