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Humour-based Learning: From the Lens of Adolescents

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Humour-Based Learning: From the Lens of Adolescents

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Abstract

Along with its psychological, physical and social benefits, humour has proved undeniably useful in educational contexts especially for the last sixty years. In order to close the research gap in Turkey, the current study scrutinized secondary school students' views on the educational use of humour. Accordingly, 525 students attending state secondary schools were administered the Educational Humour Scale (EHS) in order to see whether they significantly differ in their related views regarding gender and types of schools they were attending. Their responses were qualitatively analysed through Nvivo 9, and codes, sub-codes and themes were formed based on the analysis results. An approximate consensus has been reached among the students on the idea that use of humour is profoundly beneficial in education. The statistical findings have revealed that the students do not significantly differ in their views on the use of humour in education with respect to gender and types of schools they attend ($p > .05$). The study ends with a few practical implications on the findings and suggestions for further research.

Keywords: humour, educational humour, secondary education

El Aprendizaje Basado en el Humor: desde la Lente de los Adolescentes

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Resumen

Junto con sus beneficios psicológicos, físicos y sociales, el humor ha demostrado ser útil en contextos educativos, especialmente durante los últimos sesenta años. Con el fin de cerrar la brecha de investigación en Turquía, el estudio actual analizó las opiniones de los estudiantes de secundaria sobre el uso educativo del humor. En consecuencia, a 525 estudiantes que asistieron a escuelas secundarias estatales se les administró la Escala de Humor Educativo (EHS) para ver si difieren significativamente en sus puntos de vista relacionados con el género y los tipos de escuelas a las que asisten. Sus respuestas se analizaron cualitativamente a través de Nvivo 9, y se formaron códigos, subcódigos y temas en función de los resultados del análisis. Se llegó a un consenso aproximado sobre la idea de que el uso del humor es profundamente beneficioso para la educación. Los resultados estadísticos han revelado que los estudiantes no difieren significativamente en sus puntos de vista sobre el uso del humor en la educación con respecto al género y los tipos de escuelas a las que asisten ($p > .05$). El estudio finaliza con algunas implicaciones prácticas sobre los hallazgos y sugerencias para futuras investigaciones.

Palabras clave: humor, humor educativo, educación secundaria

T 21st century has experienced significant reforms and tendencies in education, which has raised particular questions about instructional approaches, strategies and techniques as well as role of teachers and students in learning process. One of the most prevalent questions addresses how learning could be more effective, permanent and enjoyable. In response, humour is suggested as one of the tools that help students get actively involved in the learning process and obtain pleasure from it in view of the fact that it could be efficiently employed in transmitting knowledge by “shifting the role of the students from passive to active participants of the learning environment” (Avşar, 2008). Özkara (2013) identifies humour as “a way of reasoning with its social, emotional, cognitive and linguistic components that are all meaningful”. It has been depicted as a way of life interpretation (Vural, 2004), the ability to recognise the enjoyable aspects of life (Aydm, 2005), and interpretation of events from individual perspectives. A general consensus seems to exist that humour is a social phenomenon (Ruch, 1998) with its characteristics that relieve, please and entertain humans. In a similar vein, Yirci et al., (2016) advocate that it could be used in various contexts including education since it can help students focus and maintain their attention to the subject matters (Ziv, 1979), reduce tension in the classroom, alleviate boredom, disarm aggression, and stimulate students’ interest (Gorham & Christophel, 1990). The use of humour has been recommended for virtually every grade level from preschool to university, and for various subjects –including language arts, reading, math, statistics, science, and psychology (Ivy, 2013, p. 39). Namely, Blackmore (2011, p. 16) posits that children are more likely to learn and retain information if they are happy and feel secure rather than feel threatened or anxious in the classroom where humour could be used to create more relaxed learning climates. It serves such functions as encouraging students to think critically (Kazancı, 1989), facilitating learning for students (Akkaya, 2011), and increasing their motivation to get involved in learning activities (Açıkgöz, 2003). Likewise, Wanzer (2002) postulates that the use of humour in the classroom allows for a positive communication between teachers and students increasing students’ eager to learn, which is also stated in subsequent research (Schmitz, 2002; Torok et al., 2004; Garner, 2006). It softens classroom atmosphere and creates a positive climate in the classroom allowing an appropriate learning environment (Lei et al., 2010; Jeder, 2015). In addition, it reduces stress,

anxiety and boredom in the classroom improving teacher-student interaction, making learning fun, increasing interest to knowledge, facilitating comprehension, and making learning permanent (Torok et al., 2004; Martin, 2007; Ahern, 2008). Deiter (2000, p. 27) argues that humour is used most effectively as a presentation tool when well-planned and well-thought out, and that it can be used to increase an instructor's credibility, likability, professional image, and perhaps most importantly, teaching effectiveness. Besides, students frequently underline having a good sense of humour while describing characteristics of a good teacher (Garner, 2006). Teachers state that appropriate use of humour has a positive influence on students' learning drawing their attention. Thereby, students are considered to display higher motivation towards learning (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2015, p. 26), and to be provided a positive learning environment (Davenport, 2015). In a similar vein, it has been associated with a more interesting and relaxed learning environment, higher instructor evaluations, greater perceived motivation to learn, and enjoyment of the course (Banas et al., 2011, p. 137). Developing the sense of humour and nurturing a quality humour both among students and teachers are ways in which school would get more value, in the sense that it would provide the necessary tools to create and maintain wellness, to stimulate thought, imagination, positive emotions etc. as goals or targets of an authentic education (Jeder, 2015, p.833). Accordingly, due to its cognitive, emotional, psychological and pedagogical benefits, the educational institutions of different levels should aim to facilitate developing a good sense of humour in students.

Review of the related literature on instructional use of humour shows that it has been investigated with various sampling groups such as school administrators, teachers and students. Namely, Savaş (2013) investigated the influence of humour activities prepared in accord with the principles of constructive approach on primary school students' academic achievement and reported that humour has positively influenced the students' success in Turkish language course. Yirci et al. (2016) scrutinized humour tendencies of school administrators and found that they do not significantly differ with respect to such variables as age, gender and type of institution they were working, and that their tendencies were not observed at the intended level. In a subsequent study, Balta (2016) reported that teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of humour in education. Concerning its use in primary

education, Altinkurt and Yılmaz (2011) concluded that teachers generally display a pluralistic sense of humour, and that their sense of humour differs regarding gender and area of discipline while it does not differ in terms of seniority, and age. As in the case of students, Linh (2011) highlights that the educational use of humour is perceived differently in schools located in the west (European countries and US) and Asia mentioning the finding that humour is perceived by the Chinese undergraduate students as the least important factors in the ideal Chinese personality (Yue et al., 2006) while it is considered remarkably significant in the western societies.

Stuart and Rosenfeld (1994) reported that when students viewed instructors as using no humour, they perceived the classroom as having a relatively formal classroom atmosphere –very controlled and task-focused but also low in instructor support, and that they perceived the classroom environment as non-supportive, competitive, and controlled when instructors primarily used hostile humour, even when it was minimal. Conducting a similar study with a focus on students' perception of teacher uses of humour to enact power and gain compliance, Punyanunt (1997) revealed that students' and instructors' humorous orientations are quite different, that students' perceptions did not affect their perceptions of college teachers' humour orientation, and that student humour orientations have little effect on teacher's use of humour. Makewa et al. (2011), on the other hand, concluded that the use of humour in teaching is generally good and that there is a significant, moderate relationship between the use of humour and students' rating of teachers' effectiveness; namely, teachers who use humour in teaching are generally rated effective in terms of motivation, creation of engaging lessons and anxiety reduction in students.

As for the context of higher education, Berk (1996) studied the effectiveness of 10 systematic strategies for using humour as a teaching tool: (i) humorous material on syllabi; (ii) descriptors, cautions, and warnings on the covers of handouts; (iii) opening jokes; (iv) skits/dramatizations; (v) spontaneous humour; (vi) humorous questions; (vii) humorous examples; (viii) humorous problem sets; (ix) Jeopardy!TM -type reviews for exams; and (x) humorous material on exams, and reported that students perceived the humour techniques as “very effective” or “extremely effective” in reducing their anxiety, facilitating learning, and enhancing academic performance (cited in Segrist & Hupp, 2015). Scarborough (2014) examined behaviours

inherent in the instructional use of humour in an online university from the student's perspective, and informed that students participating in online classes report more learning behaviours when their instructor seemingly has high humour orientation, places significant value on the use of humour in their teaching/ learning presentation and begins class with humorous material. Pham (2014) examined university teachers' and students' perceptions of the roles of humour in EFL teaching, teachers' practices of humour use, and students' response to teachers' use of humour in the context of Vietnamese higher education. The researcher found the majority of university EFL teachers and students held positive views of the use of humour in EFL teaching and believed that humour has affective and cognitive benefits for students, their learning, and the teacher-student relationship. Zhou (2015) explored engineering design students' perceptions of humour in the experiences of creativity development in Project-Organized Groups (POGs) in China, and found that humorous people are considered creative, and humour is regarded as not only a personality or communication tool, but also the outcome of applying creative ideas in design practice. The students are also of the opinion that it is the immediate ability to create using language in ongoing communication contexts, and mainly used to keep individuals' harmonious relationship with the group. In a study carried out with international students in the US, informed that the materials including humour elements improved students' understanding of the presented topics and stimulated their interest in learning.

Çakıroğlu and Erdoğan (2016) stress that research on the use of humour in education and psychology in Turkey is relatively restricted. In most of the studies, humour has been investigated in face-to-face education and teacher-centred education contexts (Vural, 2004; Aslan, 2006; Topçuoğlu, 2007; Yerlikaya, 2007; Avşar, 2008; Sümer, 2008; Yardımcı, 2010; Özkara, 2013; Savaş, 2013; Topal, 2013; Balta, 2016; Yirci et al., 2016). It has also been concluded that most of them were literature review-based rather than applied research, and that little research has been carried out with a focus on students' views toward the use of humour in education (Ay, 2011). In this regard, Balta (2016) highlights the need for revealing students' views and attitudes on the instructional use of humour because of the influence of humour on their learning. Hence, this particular study is considered to contribute to extensive use of humour in education. It is specifically motivated to reveal students'

views on the use of humour in learning process, and to address the following research questions.

1. What are the students' views on the use of humour in educational settings?
2. Do the students' views on the use of humour in educational settings significantly differ regarding types of schools they attend?
3. Do the students' views on the use of humour in educational settings significantly differ regarding grades they are enrolled?
4. Do the students' views on the use of humour in educational settings significantly differ regarding gender?

The following section is intended to offer methodological outline of the study adopted for the purpose of seeking answers to these questions.

Research Design

In this section, sampling of the research, data collection instruments as well as their development process, and data analysis are identified.

Participants

A total of 505 students attending secondary schools in different types of state schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Turkey in Academic Year 2016-2017 voluntarily participated in this research. At the time of data collection, they were studying at different grades. Table 1 provides their distribution across schools and gender, and demographic information.

As illustrated in Table 1, approximately 63% of the participants were female and slightly over 37% were male. A relatively balanced distribution was achieved among types of secondary schools they were attending (Anatolian High School: 33.7%; Science High School: 33.6%; Social Sciences High School: 35%). Lastly, the number of the students did not dramatically differ across grade levels. Method of data collection and analysis are identified in the following section.

Table 1:

Demographic information about participants

Variables		f	%
Gender	Female	325	62,9
	Male	200	37,1
School Type	Anatolian High School	172	32,7
	Science High School	177	33,7
	Social Sciences High School	176	33,6
Grade	9 th Grade	183	35,0
	10 th Grade	177	33,7
	11 th Grade	165	31,3
Total		525	100

Materials and Procedure. In order to elicit students’ views on the use of humour in education, the Educational Humour Scale (EHS, henceforth) comprising 20 likert-type was developed by the researchers. In addition, students were posed an open-ended item for the purpose of obtaining their related views in more detail. It is noteworthy that the scale items were developed after an extensive literature review on the use of humour in educational settings. Considering the cognitive, social, and psychological characteristics of the target mass into account, a pool of 24 likert-type items were initially created after examining the instrumentation used in Garner (2006),Wanzer (2002), Blackmore (2011), Savaş (2013), and Yirci et al. (2016). Subsequently, content validity of the tool was assessed through expert opinion from two faculty members at a state university in Turkey who are specialized in programme development and instruction, and who have published several works on humour-based learning. In accord with their views, four items were excluded from the scale as they were reported close in meaning and/ or somewhat irrelevant to the other items.

Construct validity of the scale was assessed through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, respectively. The data set was found appropriate for factor analysis by the results of Bartlett's sphericity test ($p<.05$. $df=190$, $\chi^2=5262.392$), and the KMO index (Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin) (.948), which are both significant in the literature (Pallant, 2005). Table 2 indicates results of the exploratory factor analysis of the scale.

Table 2:

Factor loads of the Educational Humour Scale (EHS)

Items	Factor Load	
	1	
1	Increases course success.	,754
2	Increases the motivation to engage in learning process.	,751
3	Promotes active engagement in class.	,735
4	Increases self-efficacy to learn.	,729
5	Brings teachers and students closer.	,719
6	Creates a positive learning environment by reducing tension in the classroom.	,713
7	Makes learning enjoyable.	,713
8	Makes learning easier.	,702
9	Overcomes negative prejudices for the course.	,689
10	Makes subjects matters interesting.	,689
11	Makes courses appealing to students.	,683
12	Increases student motivation.	,682
13	Makes learning permanent.	,675
14	Facilitates understanding of challenging concepts.	,664
15	Increases attention to courses.	,643
16	Encourages collaboration among students in learning.	,639
17	Establishes trust between teacher and students and among students.	,624
18	Encourages students to express themselves without hesitation.	,602
19	Increases time devoted to (preparation for) courses.	,579
20	Facilitates linking newly-learnt information with real life.	,547
Eigenvalue 9.216		Total Variance 46.082%

As shown in Table 2, factor loads of scale items ranges from .547 to .754. It is stated in the literature that factor loads between .30 and .40 could be established as lower cut-off point (Can, 2017, p. 317; Büyüköztürk, 2017, p. 133). In this study, it was set as .50, and no items were excluded from the scale since their factor loads were counted above this value. Mplus programme was utilized for calculations of the confirmatory factor analysis. The related Path diagram and the results are shown in Figure 1.

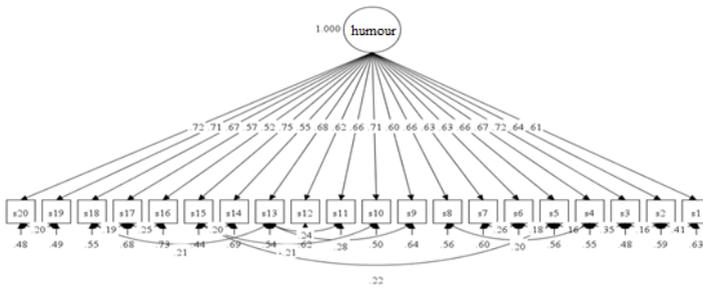


Figure 1. CFA Path diagram for the educational humour scale

First of the fit indices of CFA models is the chi-square statistics (χ^2), which is calculated by proportioning to degree of freedom (df). The index indicates excellent fit if χ^2/df is counted less than 3, and acceptable fit if counted less than 5. Accordingly, the index indicates excellent fit in this study as the proportion was counted lower than 3 ($444.341 / 154 = 2.885$) (Sümer, 2000). Table 3 provides the statistical results in detail.

Table 3:
Fit indices of the educational humour scale

Fit Indices	Excellent Fit	Acceptable Values	Fit Values of the Scale
CFI	$0.95 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq CFI \leq 0.95$	0.944
NNFI(TLI)	$0.95 \leq NNFI(TLI) \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq NNFI(TLI) \leq 0.95$	0.931
SRMR	$0.00 \leq SRMR \leq 0.05$	$0.05 \leq SRMR \leq 0.10$	0.041
RMSEA	$0.00 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.05$	$0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.08$	0.061

Table 3 suggests that Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was counted .041, that Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was .061, that Non-Normative Fit Index (NNFI) was .0931, and that Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was .944. That is, fit indices of the scale were found excellent or acceptable, indicating that its construct validity and compliance validity were provided (Sümer, 2000; Yılmaz & Çelik, 2009).

The Alpha model was used to assess the reliability of the scale, and Cronbach’s Alpha reliability value was calculated .936. Total correlation values of the scale items are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Item correlation values for the educational humour scale

No	Items	Corrected total item correlation
1	Increases attention to courses.	,595
2	Increases student motivation.	,635
3	Increases the motivation to engage in learning process.	,704
4	Makes learning enjoyable.	,659
5	Makes learning easier.	,657
6	Makes learning permanent.	,629
7	Facilitates understanding of challenging concepts.	,622
8	Makes subjects matters interesting.	,642
9	Establishes trust between teacher and students and among students.	,575
10	Creates a positive learning environment by reducing tension in the classroom.	,666
11	Makes courses appealing to students.	,634
12	Encourages collaboration among students in learning.	,601
13	Brings teachers and students closer.	,676
14	Increases time devoted to (preparation for) courses.	,538
15	Increases course success.	,724
16	Facilitates linking newly-learnt information with real life.	,508
17	Encourages students to express themselves without hesitation.	,560
18	Overcomes negative prejudices for the course.	,645
19	Increases self-efficacy to learn.	,692
20	Promotes active engagement in class.	,697

Total correlation of EHS items ranges from .508 to .724. No items were excluded from the scale since no correlation value was found below the lower cut-off point .50. The following section is intended to provide information about data analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were collected through EHS that consisted of likert-type items pointed from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Levels of agreement and related score intervals are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5:
Levels of agreement and score intervals in EHS

<u>Score Intervals</u>	<u>Levels of Agreement</u>
1.00-1.79	Strongly disagree
1.80-2.59	Disagree
2.60-3.39	Undecided
3.40-4.19	Agree
4.20-5.00	Strongly agree

Within the framework of the aims of the present study, the quantitative data elicited from the participants' responses to likert-type items were analysed through the independent samples t-test and the one-way variance analysis (ANOVA), and the qualitative data obtained from participants' responses to the open-ended item were analysed through content analysis. Their responses were also analysed and modelled through NVivo 9, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis programme. Themes, codes, sub-codes, and frequency values obtained from data analysis were presented in the form of a model. The related results are outlined and discussed in the following section.

Findings

The first research question of the study was to reveal the students' views on the use of humour in educational settings. The related results are given in Table 6.

Table 6:
Students' views on the use of humour in education

No	Scale Items	\bar{X}	ss	Level of agreement
1	Increases attention to courses.	3,97	1,077	Agree
2	Increases student motivation.	4,22	4,02	Strongly Agree
3	Increases the motivation to engage in learning process.	4,28	3,97	Strongly Agree
4	Makes learning enjoyable.	4,56	0,757	Strongly Agree
5	Makes learning easier.	4,04	0,991	Agree
6	Makes learning permanent.	4,05	1,029	Agree
7	Facilitates understanding of challenging concepts.	4,01	1,088	Agree
8	Makes subjects matters interesting.	4,38	0,912	Strongly Agree
9	Establishes trust between teacher and students and among students.	4,14	1,049	Agree
10	Creates a positive learning environment by reducing tension in the classroom.	4,32	0,903	Strongly Agree
11	Makes courses appealing to students.	4,34	0,992	Strongly Agree
12	Encourages collaboration among students in learning.	3,84	1,093	Agree
13	Brings teachers and students closer.	4,28	0,931	Strongly Agree
14	Increases time devoted to (preparation for) courses.	3,43	1,277	Agree
15	Increases course success.	3,86	1,025	Agree
16	Facilitates linking newly-learnt information with real life.	4,02	1,058	Agree
17	Encourages students to express themselves without hesitation.	4,10	1,077	Agree
18	Overcomes negative prejudices for the course.	4,07	1,015	Agree
19	Increases self-efficacy to learn.	4,01	1,031	Agree
20	Promotes active engagement in class.	4,22	0,955	Strongly Agree
TOTAL		4,10	0,678	Agree

The participant students' tend to strongly agree and agree on 8 and 12 items, respectively. They generally agreed to the items on the scale ($\bar{X}=4.10$). They mostly agreed to the item "Humour makes learning enjoyable" ($\bar{X}=4.56$) and least to the item "Increases time devoted to (preparation for) courses" ($\bar{X}=3.43$). The results of the independent samples

t-test that was administered to see whether students’ views on the use of humour in education differ regarding gender are presented in Table 7.

Table 7:
Students’ views on the use of humour in education regarding gender

Gender	N	\bar{X}	ss	sd	t	p
Female	317	4,11	0,663	503	0,297	0,147
Male	188	4,09	0,704			

As illustrated in Table 7, no statistically significant difference was found between female and male students in terms of their views on the use of humour in education ($p>.05$). The results of one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) with respect to school types the students were attending are demonstrated in Table 8.

Table 8:
ANOVA results for students’ views on the use of humour in education regarding school

<i>School Type</i>	<i>N</i>	\bar{X}	<i>ss</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>Mean Squares</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Anatolian High School	165	4,11	,646	502	,521	1,132	,323
Science High School	170	4,04	,667		,460		
Social Sciences High School	170	4,15	,717				
TOTAL	505	4,10	,678	504			

The test results have shown that the students do not significantly differ in their views on educational use of humour with respect to types of secondary schools they were attending ($F= 1,132$; $p>0.05$). Lastly, ANOVA results for their related views regarding grades they were studying are given in Table 9.

Table 9:

Students' views on the use of humour in education regarding grade

Grades	N	\bar{x}	ss	sd	Mean Squares	F	p
9 th Grade	177	4,06	0,666		0,201		
10 th Grade	171	4,13	0,658	2	0,461	0,436	0,647
11 th Grade	157	4,12	0,714	502			
TOPLAM	505	4,10	0,678	504			

As seen in Table 9, the means related to the educational use of humour were compared with regard to grades students were studying, and it was concluded that the difference between the squares were found statistically insignificant ($F= 0,436$; $p>.05$).

In order for a comprehensive analysis of students' views on the educational use of humour, they were asked whether they think humour should be used in education and requested to explain their answers briefly at the end of the scale. It is noteworthy that 75% of the participants responded to this item and that slightly over 46% of them expressed positive views on the use of humour in education, 3,4% reacted to it negatively while approximately 25% expressed conditionally positive opinions on it. The themes related to their responses and explanations are illustrated in Figure 2.

As could be seen in Figure 2, students' views on educational use of humour were coded as *positive views* ($f=419$), *negative views* ($f=61$), and *conditionally positive views* ($f=163$). Such sub-themes as *contribution to learning process* ($f=268$), *psychological contribution* ($f=163$), and *contribution to class management* ($f=18$) were created under the theme of positive views. Based on students' responses, the following codes were formed under the subtheme of contribution to learning process: *obtaining pleasure from the course* ($f=110$), *increasing attention* ($f=24$), *active participation/ engagement in class* ($f=30$), *permanent learning* ($f=28$), *increasing course success* ($f=24$), and *making learning easier* ($f=22$). Codes drawn from the subtheme psychological contribution could be listed as *increasing attention to courses* ($f=78$), *overcoming negative prejudices for*

the course ($f=4$), bringing teacher and students closer ($f=50$), increasing motivation ($f=17$), and inspiring self-confidence ($f=14$). The following are the extracts driven from students who positively responded to the question ‘Do you think humour should be used in education?’

“Yes, I do. When our teacher uses humour in the classroom, I feel closer to her, and this helps me ask questions without hesitation” (P-3)

“Yes. I retain what learned in class longer when humour is used. I love the courses in which humour is used. I also believe that it increases our motivation and brings us (students) closer. Finally, students tend to respect more to the teachers who uses humour, and to do their best to fulfil responsibilities assigned by them” (P-12)

“Humour should be used in the classroom because it plays an important role in overcoming our negative prejudices toward the courses, and creates a more enjoyable learning environment, which alleviates boredom and monotony in the classroom” (P-125)

“We simply do not count the minutes for the class to end when humour is used” (P-337)

The participants who conditioned their positive views on the use of humour in education stated that *it should be used cautiously* ($f=62$), *when needed* (49), *efficiently* ($f=36$), and *when it is not offending* ($f=8$). The following are taken from their responses to the item in concern.

“I find it as a positive component as long as it is not offending. Then, it helps us love the school and courses when we have fun while learning” (P-48)

“It should be used during classes within reason. The classes will be underestimated by the students and disturbs the discipline in the classroom if humour is overused” (P-67)

“I strongly believe that it should be used in the classroom on condition that it is used at the right time. I, personally, listen to the subject matters more carefully and attentively, feel more open to learning, and leave the class in a good mood when our teachers use humour” (P-246)

“I believe it should be used only by the teachers with a good sense of humours; otherwise, it will decrease attention to the subjects, and be time-wasting” (P-311)

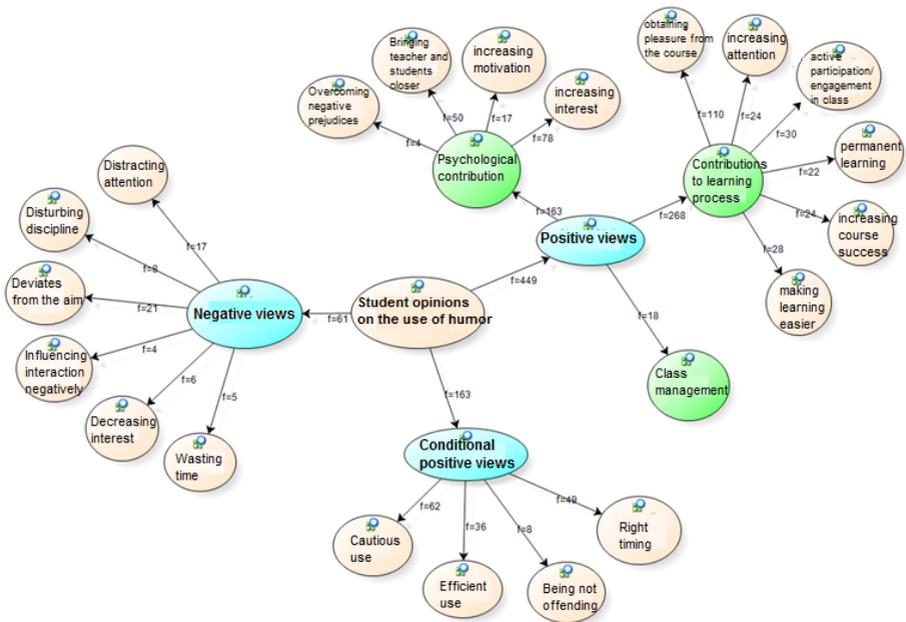


Figure 2. Students' views on educational use of humour

Lastly, those who reported it should be avoided in the classroom since *it deviates from the aim* ($f=21$), *distracts attention* ($f=17$), *disturbs discipline* ($f=8$), *reduces attention* ($f=7$), *wastes time* ($f=6$), and *influences interaction negatively* ($f=4$). The following extracts are intended to exemplify them.

“I do not agree with this idea since it disrupts the classes” (P-51)

“No. I believe it might be offending especially among students” (P-74)

“I do not believe that it should be used in the classroom because I generally lose my attention to the subjects, and there is so much noise in the classroom because everybody is trying to make fun of each other.” (P-118)

“It should not be used in the classroom because it decreases students’ attention and causes loss of discipline” (P-220)

The following section includes discussion on the above-mentioned findings of the research, conclusions, and practical implications for teachers and teacher trainers.

Discussion, Conclusion and Practical Implications

In accord with the total values of scale items on educational use of humour have revealed that they display a positive approach in this concern. This finding overlaps with Topal (2013), who reported primary school students and teachers have positive perceptions on humour, respectively. No statistically significant difference was found in students' views on the educational use of humour concerning gender, which is also in line with Topal (2013). The results indicated that they significantly differ with respect to types of secondary schools they were attending at the time of the study, confirming Ay (2011) who concluded students studying at Anatolian high schools have more positive beliefs on humour than those attending vocational high schools.

Another finding of the study is that the secondary school students do not significantly differ in their views on the educational use of humour with respect to grades they were enrolled. This finding seems to contradict with Topal (2013), who informed that 8th graders (senior students in primary education in Turkey, 2017) have more positive views on humour than the students attending lower grades, and attributes it to the age factor. Nonetheless, our findings indicated that 10th and 11th graders reported slightly more positive views on the educational use of humour as opposed to 9th graders.

The current research yielded findings that confirm previous research (Berk, 1996; Aydın, 2005; Oruç, 2010; Savaş, 2013; Scarborough, 2014), who concluded humour increases academic success of the students. Likewise, our findings approve the ones previously informed by various scholars (Stuart & Rosenfield, 1994; Berk, 1996; Schmitz, 2002; Garner, 2006; Banas et al., 2011; Torok et al., 2004; Blackmore, 2011; Makewa et al., 2011; Pham, 2014; Bolkan & Goodboy, 2015; Davenport, 2015) who found that humour increases interest, attention, and motivation to the class, and increases student success. Oruç (2006) contends that humour provides better learning drawing students' attention, making learning enjoyable,

reducing anxiety in the learning environment, improving teacher-student interaction and social interactions among students. This particular view is supported with the present findings of our study considering the students' such responses as "use of humour in education brings teacher and students closer and increases interest and motivation to learn". Blackmore (2011) concludes that humour has an important role in building positive learning environments. All in all, findings reported in the current and previous studies have demonstrated that humour has academic, social and psychological benefits for the students during the educational process. It might be attributed to its power to make instructors more likable, approachable, facilitate comprehension, increase attentiveness, improve creativity, and promote social relationships (Lei et al., 2010, 326), and to create a positive social dimension amongst peers (Leslie, 2015). Similarly, Topçuoğlu (2007) attributes it to the fact that humour gives physiological and emotional relaxation to the students making learning faster and more permanent and increases interest and attention to classes. When considering the participants of the present study were secondary school students who are supposed to take a total of 40 hours classes a week, humour could be recommended as a beneficial tool in overcoming boredom in the classroom. The idea that humour influences teachers' in-class performance and their interaction with students (Stuart & Rosenfield, 1994; Schmitz, 2002; Lei et al, 2010; Altinkurt & Yılmaz, 2011; Leslie, 2015) is supported with the finding humour brings teacher and students closer, which was revealed in the current research. Those who conditioned their positive views on the educational use of humour stated such conditions as cautious use while those who reported negative views had several hesitations about the use of humour in education such as distracting attention, disturbing discipline, and decreasing attention. This finding confirms Oruç (2010) who warns that it might deviate from the aim and disturb the discipline in the classroom. Hence, students' understanding of humour could be taken into consideration, and it should be avoided when it is offending and harmful to self-respect (Berk, 1996; Topçuoğlu, 2007). Presence of the students who reported negative views for the educational use of humour might be attributed to that it is known as a fun element rather than a tool to be used in learning process. It could also be accounted for adverse experiences between teacher and students and/ or among students, which approves Kaya (2011). In this regard, Berk (1996, p. 88) suggests that

strategies for using humour must be planned well and executed systematically to achieve specific outcomes, and that both content-specific and generic humorous material tailored to the characteristics of each class can be effective in appropriate applications. The researcher also recommends that a wide range of low-risk humour techniques could be very effective in reducing anxiety and improving learning and performance especially when two or more senses are involved (visual and oral senses).

Many studies on the use of humour in workplace/ school have revealed that it is, by and large, initiated by those in charge –managers at workplace, and principals and teachers in educational settings. Besides, Fovet (2009) acknowledges that the in-depth research in the field of human resources indicated strong correlation between employees' perception of good leadership and superiors' use of humour. Having a good sense of humour has frequently been reported among top characteristics and qualities of effective teachers. So, when considered the initiator of affiliative humour as leaders in the classroom, the teachers can shape a behavioural strategy with the aim of facilitating interpersonal closeness and relationship satisfaction in a way that is affirming to self and the others. They also can use it as a tool to enhance the curriculum and defuse discipline problems as the students are motivated to listen and read something humorous and often unaware that they are drawing conclusions, making inferences and predictions. Hence, in accord with the findings reached in this study and taking the fact that classroom humour is mostly initiated by teachers into consideration, the following practical implications have been developed for teachers and curriculum/ textbook designers even though it principally addressed secondary school students' opinions on the instructional use of humour.

1. Teachers could be suggested to use humour as “a potential vehicle for the introduction of active learning in a classroom setting, as judicious use of humour may lead to a more relaxed learning atmosphere and greater student engagement”.
2. They might be offered in-service training courses for effective and relevant use of humour in education. Alternatively, Deiter (2000) suggests teachers to spend some time before each class actually thinking about humorous material that might be used, to select

humour that they are comfortable with, and to form a humour file including materials taken from newspapers, magazines, books, radio and TV shows, humour journals and newsletters, the internet, as well as other people.

3. Curriculum/textbook designers are recommended to integrate humour elements into the existing curricula and textbooks in order to make learning fun and permanent.
4. The students' views on the educational use of humour and its correlation with their attitudes toward courses, academic achievement, and their interaction with teachers could be elicited. Subsequently, taking the learning outcomes in the curriculum, they might be asked to prepare and bring materials including fun elements into the classroom.
5. Humour-based learning should be encouraged from pre-school to higher education for more effective use of humour as an instructional tool.

All in all, findings of the present study could not be generalised due to a number of reasons. Accordingly, the limitations of the study and a few suggestions are identified in the following section.

Limitations & Suggestions for Further Research

This study is restricted to the investigation of Turkish secondary school students' views on the educational use of humour through a questionnaire developed by the researchers. It might be extended to explore views of students attending educational institution of different levels (primary and higher education) in different countries. It might also be furthered to elicit their attitude towards the use of humour in their learning through different data collection strategies such as in-class observation, video-recording, and/or interview. Lastly, further studies could investigate to what extent humour is included in real learning settings using such instrumentation as classroom observation.

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