



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun  
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

# DEVELOPING A HUMORISTIC ELEMENTS FRAMEWORK IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING CONTEXT (HumELT)

ARIF HAKIMI BIN ZULAZLI



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun  
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS

2025



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun  
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

DEVELOPING A HUMORISTIC ELEMENTS FRAMEWORK IN ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE TEACHING CONTEXT (HumELT)

ARIF HAKIMI BIN ZULAZLI

DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A MASTER OF EDUCATION  
(RESEARCH MODE)

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION  
UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS

2025



**Please tick (✓)**  
Project Paper  
Masters by Research  
Master by Mixed Mode  
PhD

/

**INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK**

This declaration is made on the 9th day of SEPTEMBER 2025

**i. Student's Declaration:**

I, ARIF HAKIMI BIN ZULAZLI (M20221001583) from FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION hereby declare that the work entitled DEVELOPING A HUMORISTIC ELEMENTS FRAMEWORK IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING CONTEXT (HumELT) is my original work. I have not copied from any other students' work or from any other sources except where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person.

Signature of the student

**ii. Supervisor's Declaration:**

I DR. MAZLIN MOHAMED MOKHTAR hereby certifies that the work entitled DEVELOPING A HUMORISTIC ELEMENTS FRAMEWORK IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING CONTEXT (HumELT) was prepared by the above named student, and was submitted to the Institute of Graduate Studies as a full fulfillment for the conferment of M.ED TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (TESL), and the aforementioned work, to the best of my knowledge, is the said student's work.

16/9/2025

Date

Signature of the Supervisor

**DR. MAZLIN MOHAMED MOKHTAR**  
Pengerah Akademi Bahasa Antarabangsa (AKAR)  
Fakulti Bahasa dan Komunikasi  
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris



**INSTITUT PENGAJIAN SISWAZAH /  
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**BORANG PENGESAHAN PENYERAHAN TESIS/DISERTASI/LAPORAN KERTAS PROJEK  
DECLARATION OF THESIS/DISSERTATION/PROJECT PAPER FORM**

Tajuk / Title: DEVELOPING A HUMORISTIC ELEMENTS FRAMEWORK IN  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING CONTEXT (HumELT)

No. Matrik /Matric's No.: M20221001583

Saya / I : ARIF HAKIMI BIN ZULAZLI

(Nama pelajar / Student's Name)

mengaku membenarkan Tesis/Disertasi/Laporan Kertas Projek (Kedoktoran/Sarjana)\* ini disimpan di Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun) dengan syarat-syarat kegunaan seperti berikut:-

*acknowledged that Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (Tuanku Bainun Library) reserves the right as follows:-*

1. Tesis/Disertasi/Laporan Kertas Projek ini adalah hak milik UPSI.  
*The thesis is the property of Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris*
2. Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun dibenarkan membuat salinan untuk tujuan rujukan dan penyelidikan.  
*Tuanku Bainun Library has the right to make copies for the purpose of reference and research.*
3. Perpustakaan dibenarkan membuat salinan Tesis/Disertasi ini sebagai bahan pertukaran antara Institusi Pengajian Tinggi.  
*The Library has the right to make copies of the thesis for academic exchange.*
4. Sila tandakan (  ) bagi pilihan kategori di bawah / *Please tick (  ) for category below:-*

**SULIT/CONFIDENTIAL**


Mengandungi maklumat yang berdarjah keselamatan atau kepentingan Malaysia seperti yang termaktub dalam Akta Rahsia Rasmi 1972. / *Contains confidential information under the Official Secret Act 1972*

**TERHAD/RESTRICTED**

Mengandungi maklumat terhad yang telah ditentukan oleh organisasi/badan di mana penyelidikan ini dijalankan. / *Contains restricted information as specified by the organization where research was done.*

**TIDAK TERHAD / OPEN ACCESS**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Tandatangan Pelajar/ Signature)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Tandatangan Penyelia / Signature of Supervisor)  
& (Nama & Cop Rasmi / Name & Official Stamp)

Tarikh: 17/9/2025

**DR. MAZLIN MOHAMED MOKHTAR**  
Pegawai Akademik Bahasa Antarabangsa (AKAR)  
Fakulti Bahasa dan Komunikasi  
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris

Catatan: Jika Tesis/Disertasi ini **SULIT @ TERHAD**, sila lampirkan surat daripada pihak berkuasa/organisasi berkenaan dengan menyatakan sekali sebab dan tempoh laporan ini perlu dikelaskan sebagai **SULIT** dan **TERHAD**.

*Notes: If the thesis is CONFIDENTIAL or RESTRICTED, please attach with the letter from the organization with period and reasons for confidentiality or restriction.*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Mazlin Binti Mohamed Mokhtar, for her continuous support, patience, and invaluable guidance throughout the process of completing this dissertation. Her expertise, constructive feedback, and encouragement have been vital in helping me stay focused and motivated during challenging times. I am truly fortunate to have had the opportunity to work under her supervision. I am also immensely thankful to my parents, whose endless love, prayers, and sacrifices have laid the foundation for my academic journey. Their unwavering support has been my strength throughout the years, and I could not have reached this milestone without them. To my loving wife, Nur Atiqah, words cannot express how grateful I am for your presence, patience, and encouragement through every high and low. Thank you for believing in me even when I doubted myself, and for being a constant source of strength, love, and motivation. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) for providing the facilities, resources, and academic environment that have supported my learning and research. The experience and knowledge I have gained here will stay with me for a lifetime. Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all the English lecturers at the Faculty of Language and Communication. Your dedication to teaching and your willingness to share your knowledge have played a significant role in shaping my academic development.





## ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the elements of humour in English language teaching among lecturers in Malaysian higher education setting. A mixed method research design consists of both qualitative and quantitative data. Data were collected through survey, classroom observation, as well as semi-structured interview. Using a purposive sampling technique, a total of 108 English lecturers participated. Descriptive and inferential analyses revealed that among the core elements of humour in the classroom, style ranked as the most significant, followed by content and types. The Friedman test confirmed statistically significant differences between these elements ( $\chi^2(2) = 69.815$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The result also indicates that there are three elements of humour commonly used by lecturers which are types of humour (verbal, visual), content of humour (culture-based, universal-based, linguistic-based), and styles of humour (affiliative, aggressive). The findings show that these elements of humour are used to increase classroom interactions, shape classroom environment and established classroom management. Based on the findings a Humouristic Elements Framework (HumELT) were developed. The HumELT framework provides a guide for integrating humour into teaching practices, benefiting teacher training programs and improving student engagement and learning outcomes. The implication of the study encourages further research on humour's impact in different educational settings, offering a foundation for future studies.





## PEMBINAAN KERANGKA ELEMEN HUMORISTIK DALAM KONTEKS PENGAJARAN BAHASA INGGERIS (HumELT)

### ABSTRAK

Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji unsur-unsur jenaka dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan pensyarah pendidikan tinggi Malaysia. Reka bentuk penyelidikan kaedah campuran terdiri daripada data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Data dikumpul melalui tinjauan, pemerhatian bilik darjah, serta temu bual separa berstruktur. Kajian ini menggunakan teknik persampelan bertujuan, seramai 108 orang pensyarah Bahasa Inggeris terlibat dalam kajian ini. Analisis deskriptif dan inferensi mendedahkan bahawa antara unsur teras jenaka dalam bilik darjah, gaya diletakkan sebagai yang paling penting, diikuti dengan kandungan dan jenis. Ujian Friedman mengesahkan perbezaan ketara secara statistik antara unsur-unsur ini ( $\chi^2(2) = 69.815$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan terdapat tiga unsur jenaka yang biasa digunakan oleh pensyarah iaitu jenis jenaka (verbal, visual), kandungan jenaka (berasaskan budaya, universal, berasaskan linguistik), dan gaya jenaka (affiliatif, agresif). Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa unsur-unsur jenaka ini digunakan untuk meningkatkan interaksi bilik darjah, membentuk persekitaran bilik darjah dan pengurusan bilik darjah yang mantap. Berdasarkan penemuan, Rangka Kerja Unsur Humoristik (HumELT) telah dibangunkan. Rangka kerja HumELT menyediakan panduan untuk menyepadukan jenaka ke dalam amalan pengajaran, memanfaatkan program latihan guru dan meningkatkan penglibatan pelajar dan hasil pembelajaran. Implikasi kajian ini menggalakkan penyelidikan lanjut tentang kesan jenaka dalam tetapan pendidikan yang berbeza, menawarkan asas untuk kajian masa depan.



## CONTENT

	<b>Page</b>
<b>DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK</b>	ii
<b>DECLARATION OF DISSERTATION FORM</b>	iii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	iv
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	v
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	vi
<b>CONTENT</b>	vii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	viii
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	ix

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Background of the Study	2
1.3	Problem Statement	5
1.4	Research Objectives	8
1.5	Research Questions	9
1.6	Purpose of Study	9
1.7	Theoretical Framework	11
1.8	Conceptual Framework	14
1.9	Limitation of study	17

1.10	Significant of the study	18
1.11	Definition of terms	19
1.12	Summary	28

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction	32
2.2	The Three Dominant Theory of Humour	35
2.2.1	Superiority Theory	36
2.2.2	Incongruity Theory	39
2.2.3	Relief Theory	44
2.3	Humouristic Element in ELT	47
2.3.1	The Types of Humour in ELT	48
2.3.2	The Content of Humour in ELT	52
2.3.3	The Style of Humour in ELT	53
2.4	The Impact of Humour in ELT	58
2.4.1	Role of Humour in Classroom Management	59
2.4.2	Role of Humour in Classroom Environment	61
2.4.3	Role of Humour in Classroom Interaction	64
2.5	Humour in The Malaysian Classroom	67
2.6	Research Framework	69
2.6.1	Conceptual Framework	70
2.6.2	Theoretical Framework	71
2.7	Summary	76

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	82
3.2 Research Design	86
3.3 Sampling	87
3.4 Instruments	89
3.4.1 Survey	89
3.4.2 Observation Checklist	89
3.4.3 Semi-Structured Interview	90
3.5 Pilot Study	91
3.6 Data Collection Procedures	91
3.7 Data Analysis Procedures	92
3.7.1 Thematic analysis	92
3.7.2 Inferential Statistical Analysis	93
3.8 Ethical Consideration	94
3.8.1 Consent Form	95
3.8.2 Data Access	97
3.8.3 Participant's Protection	98
3.8.4 Reliability and Validity	99
3.9 Limitation of Study	100
3.10 Summary	102

## CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction	106
4.2 Research Question 1	108
4.2.1 The use of humour to encourage classroom	110

## interaction

4.2.2 The use of humour to shape classroom environment	118
4.2.3 The use of humour to established classroom management	126
4.3 Research Question 2	134
4.3.1 Types of Humour	134
4.3.1.1 Verbal Humour	134
4.3.1.2 Visual Humour	143
4.3.1.3 Auditory Humour	149
4.3.2 Content of Humour	151
4.3.2.1 Culture Based Humour	152
4.3.2.2 Universal Based Humour	170
4.3.2.3 Linguistic Based Humour	180
4.3.3 Style of Humour	185
4.3.3.1 Affiliative Humour	185
4.3.3.2 Aggressive Humour	191
4.3.3.3 Self-Enhancing Humour	194
4.3.3.4 Self-Depreciating Humour	195
4.4 Research Question 3	198
4.4.1 Core elements of humour in ELT	198
4.4.2 Humouristic Framework for ELT	210

**CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION**

5.1 Introduction	216
5.2 Discussion	217



5.3 Summary of Findings	220
5.4 Implications for English Language Teaching	222
5.5 Contribution to Knowledge	224
5.6 Recommendations for Future Research	227
5.7 Conclusion	229
<b>REFERENCE</b>	232
<b>APPENDIXES</b>	241



## LIST OF TABLES

No. of Table		Page
3.1	Demographic profile of participants in classroom Observation and interview session	83
3.2	Criteria of the 108 participants participating in the survey	83
3.3	Research Questions and Instruments	84
4.1	Factors on the usage of humour in the English classroom	109
4.2	Factors on the usage of humour in the English classroom	109
4.3	Use of humour to encourage classroom interaction	110
4.4	Use of humour to shape classroom environment	118
4.5	Use of humour to established classroom management	128
4.6	Descriptive Statistics and Mean Ranks	199
4.7	Friedman Test Results	199
4.8	Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results	200
4.9	Ranks Between Elements of Humour	200
4.9	The usage of affiliative and aggressive style of humour in classroom observation	201
4.10	The usage of culture, universal and linguistic based humour in classroom observation	204
4.11	The usage of verbal and visual humour in classroom Observation	207
4.12	Initial Humouristic Element Framework for English Language	211
4.13	Humouristic Element Framework for English Language Teaching	213

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure No.</b>		<b>Page</b>
1.1	Initial Conceptual Humouristic Element Framework	15
2.1	Missing the jokes	33
2.2	Incongruity-resolution Model Suls, (1983)	42
2.3	Correlation of humour with relief and creativity	45
2.4	The types of Humour Shade (1996)	48
2.5	Multi-dimensional modal of Humour, Martin (2001)	54
2.6	The connection between types, classifications and functions of humour Bakar & Kumar, (2019)	58
2.7	Humour in English Language Teaching conceptual framework	71
2.8	The Instructional Humour Processing Theory Diagram	74
3.1	Ethical Consideration	95



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Humour exists in every part of our life; some may even consider humour as the “colour” of life. This study will focus on developing humouristic element framework which could be implement among Malaysian lecturers in higher education setting. The study focuses to identify the element of humour that revolve in education context specifically the English classroom. The study will focus to highlight the use of humouristic element in improving the language skill in general. According to Fadilla (2022) among many things, humour can bring three important aspects in the classroom setting which are the increase of students’ attention, entertainment or pleasure and stimulating learning process. When properly used, humour can be an effective tool to make a class more enjoyable, reduce anxiety, and improve the learning setting, (Joudi & Ayoub, 2023).

The development of humouristic element framework is revolved around two important aspects which are the different humouristic elements applied in the English





classroom and the factor on the usage of humouristic elements in the classroom. Based on previous studies, there are three main elements of humour that is frequently used in the English classroom, according to Robinson, Rose, Elliott, & Vivaldi, (2024) humour in the classroom often revolve around the types of humour, content of humour, and styles of humour. Hence, this study will focus on investigating the elements of humour that occurred in the English classroom. Secondly, humour is often used in the classroom to influence classroom interaction, classroom environment, and classroom management. According to Touahar (2023), educators tend to use humour in the classroom to influence classroom management, classroom environment, or classroom management, these are the factors on the occurrence of humour in the English classroom.



## 1.2 Background of the study

Humour in the English classroom is what some would say the ‘cherry on top’ of a lesson plan, including humour in the classroom may not be a priority, however, the involvement of humour and laughter in the classroom has been said to be beneficial. In recent studies, humour was found to benefit the emotional state of both educators and learners. Humour can act as a tool, or even an emotional control tool that allow educators to control the state of the classroom, Qi & Wang (2024). In a teaching and learning context, classroom interaction is vital in keeping the flow of the classroom. Especially in a language classroom where communication and interaction play a major role in improving language learning. According to Guiebre (2020) Classroom interaction is an essential element in developing communicative skills. Classroom





interaction is a crucial element in developing communicative skills because the classroom is usually the only setting in which learners are exposed to the target language.

Shaping a positive learning environments is also an important aspect in teaching. Humour is one of the primary components of the fun learning concept. According to Bukit et al. (2023) fun learning requires a sense of humour to avoid learning tension. Fun learning focuses on achieving “pleasure” in learning. Many studies have shown that humour can benefit and effect the learning environment. According to Al-Noori (2019) every teacher has the potential to promote a positive learning environment using humour as it creates a more positive, fun, interesting environment that promotes class. Meanwhile Ocon (2015) also mentioned that humour can help motivate students and create a climate that promotes learning, “Humour sells” and “laughter is universal”. Difficulties in learning are often associated with the inability of educators not being able to create the appropriate learning environment.

Classroom management (CM) is an important role in influencing the flow of the lesson. According to Islam (2023), the actions of controlling the classroom environments is challenging and overwhelming for many educators. In some cases, classroom management can also be a challenge for teachers with well over 25 years of experience (Kyriacou, 1991). Additionally, the situation may become much more complex and problematic when an element of second language classroom is added to the classroom setting (Fowler & Şaraplı, 2010). Strategies for dealing with classroom management is an area of research which is greatly demanded from educators all over the world (Altınel, 2006; Baker & Westrup, 2000; Tahir & Qadir, 2012, p. 48). In order





to construct an effective teaching model, there is an immediate need for an in-depth study of CM issues and the identification teaching techniques best suited for an effective language teaching. Thus, the use of humour in teaching English may very well have positive impact on teaching and learning English.

Fundamentally, there are four types of humour which are verbal humour, visual humour, figural humour, and auditory humour. In an English language classroom setting, these types of humour are commonly known to benefit and enhance both the teaching and learning experience. Verbal humour is considered to be the most popular type of humour that is applied in the English classroom. The application of verbal humour in the English classroom may be used to create jokes or puns in the classroom. Verbal humour includes telling puns, funny stories, content related jokes, riddles, and irony, Serralvo (2024). Visual humour is often used to create a more engaging and relaxed learning environment. Visual humour, for example funny cartoons or role-playing, can make language learning more enjoyable and relatable, helping learners grasp new vocabulary and cultural nuances. Visual humour, can break up long lectures, making complex concepts easier to understand and fostering interaction Geumei, (2023). For adult learners in ESL classrooms, humour plays a significant role in reducing the stress of learning a new language

Figural humour in ESL classrooms, particularly in higher education, uses visual elements like cartoons, exaggerated drawings, or caricatures to create humorous scenarios that aid language learning. Educators use figural humour to simplify abstract or complex language concepts, making them more relatable and easier to understand Godioli & Chłopicki, (2024). Visual humour not only captures students' attention but





also enhances their retention of new vocabulary and figurative language. By breaking down language barriers through humour, educators can foster a more dynamic, engaging classroom environment where students feel comfortable participating. Apart from that, auditory humour is also another type of humour that is commonly used in the English classroom. An example of auditory humour is things such as funny audio, clips, or voicenote that are included in the classroom. Educators may use auditory humour in a listening task, this may benefit the students in having the ability to pick up sentences and phrases. According to Nāznean (2024), humour can be used to enhance listening comprehension, humorous content is often more interesting and are able to maintain the focus of the listener.

Thus, this research will look into the element of humour applied by lecturers in Malaysian universities and its impact of using humour in higher education context to improve classroom management, learning environment, and classroom interaction. The research will look into the literature on the various elements of humour applied in the English classroom. Based on the findings a humouristic element framework will be developed in order to contribute to the gap in the field of humouristic research. The humouristic element framework will act as a guide for educators to apply humour in the English language classroom.

### 1.3 Problem Statement

Humour in teaching and learning English are often neglected especially in a Malaysian context. Humour has been practically neglected in the teaching of English in Malaysia





and Asia as well Vellaykuti, P. (2007). Over the past decade, there has been a growing interest in the relationship between creativity, fun learning, language play, and language learning. However, the application of humour in English as a Second Language (ESL) remains largely unexplored. One of the biggest challenges for ESL educators is to sustain and manage the classroom accordingly. This may be due to the lack of knowledge on their students or the lack of some special teaching strategies and techniques which ultimately may help them to manage their classes.

Philosophers of education need to stop neglecting the use of humour and embrace its potential in education (Amanah, 2019). Despite this, recent research has shown that humour may bring potential benefit in learning English. According to Baharin, (2021) One of the positive psychological benefits of humour is, it can reduce students' stress and anxiety during learning session, as humour able to bring up the positive atmosphere or mood in the classroom. The use of humour in the English classroom could improve classroom management, classroom environment, and classroom interaction.

Firstly, classroom management refers to the ability of the educator to maintain and resolve any conflict, give out instructions, and control emotional outbursts in the classroom. Humour plays a role in managing a classroom in allowing educators to be in control whilst also maintaining flexibility in the classroom. Most often classroom management is associated with situational control and how well can the teacher maintain the atmosphere of the classroom. It is important in managing the classroom to consider situation such as the actions that can be done if the classroom were to get out





of control, how can lecturers manage this type of situation? Humour can provide the necessary elements in neutralizing the situation.

Humour can be considered as a well-established pedagogical practice that has been recognized for several decades in classroom management (St-Amand, 2021). As a result, there is a need to increase the awareness among language lecturers on the opportunities that humour can provide in benefiting ELT. Most research that was carried out before would focus more in the educators' perspectives on the use of humour in the classroom however not much are illustrated on providing a guide on how to use humour in the classroom. This study will focus on how English language lecturers can use humour to shape a comfortable classroom environment, appropriate classroom interaction, and flexible classroom management. Implementing humour in the language classroom would be beneficial for both the educator and students in the process of teaching and learning English.

Secondly, Classroom environment refers to the teaching and learning state of the classroom. It is important to consider this aspect since educators have a major role in influencing the classroom environment. Teaching environment refers to the psychological condition where teaching activities take place which include elements such as the tone of the classroom and the mood of the classroom. Creating a positive teaching environment involves providing an atmosphere that is conducive to learning, where students feel comfortable, engaged, and supported. A well-designed and supportive teaching environment can help to facilitate learning and foster positive attitudes towards education.





One of the teaching tools that could be put into practice by educator is through applying humour in their teaching. Learning environment in second language (L2) is often associated to be one of the factors which decreases the students' motivation to learn. An enjoyable learning environment is often associated to a positive relationship with the educator, thus influencing the students' motivation to continue their process of learning in the classroom. According to a study from (Salmee & Arif, 2019) the majority of students in higher education strongly agree that humour has positive effects in promoting intrinsic motivation in learning the second language L2.

Thirdly, when learning a language, especially a foreign language, classroom interaction during lectures is crucial. Utilising humour to influence the increase of interaction between educators and their students is one of the best ways for teachers to improve student interaction. Humour allows an approachable appearance toward the lecturer; it is a form of welcoming gesture which signal the students for an approachable interaction. However, the majority of educators teach with a seriousness and rigidity that could adversely affect their students' attitudes towards learning, such as boredom, lack of interest and motivation to learn. (Yusob, 2018). Students' interaction is an important aspect to examine therefore appropriate teaching strategy must be implemented in order to increase interaction as well as motivating the students to learn.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The study focuses on 3 main objectives which are:





- i. To identify factors that guide the framework for the development of language skills using humouristic elements.
- ii. To determine the elements in the humouristic framework that are aligned with the language skills development.
- iii. To explore how the core elements of humour in the language skills classroom contribute to the formulation of the humouristic framework for ELT

### 1.5 Research Questions

The research questions focus on three main questions which are:

1. What are the factors that guide the framework for the development of language skills using humouristic elements?
2. What are the elements in the humouristic framework that are aligned with the language skills development?
3. How do the core elements of humour in the language skills classroom contribute to the formulation of the humouristic framework for ELT?

### 1.6 Purpose of study

The purpose of the study is to explore and identify the humouristic element in language teaching. Essentially there are three dominant theories related to humour which are the superiority, incongruity, and relief theory of humour. Based on this theory the researcher





will be able to explore the types of humouristic element which occurred in the English classroom. These three dominant theories emphasize on the physiological behaviour of human when applying humour, therefore, it is important to highlight the three dominant theories in order to determine the types and forms of humouristic element occurred in the English classroom.

Next, in order to identify the types of humouristic element in the English classroom, the researcher will refer to several categorisations made by previous scholar; Shade (1996), Chee (2006), Bakar & Kumar (2019). According to Shade (1996), there are essentially four different types of humour which are verbal humour (puns, jokes, satire, irony, wit, riddles, etc.), visual humour (sight gags, impersonation, practical jokes, impressions), figural humour (caricatures, cartoons, comic strips), and auditory humour (noises and sounds). Chee (2006) has also mentioned four humour categories which are (a) Textual: jokes, stories (b) Pictorial: comics, cartoons (c) Action/Games: video, contests, theatre, simulation, role play (d) Verbal: acronym, puns, word games.

In a more recent study Bakar & Kumar (2019) stated that there are seven types of humour commonly used by lecturers which are self-deprecating, disparaging others, lecturer-student teasing, sarcasm, funny comment, riddle and pun, funny photo or quiz questions. All of the types of humour mentioned by previous researcher correlate with each other, therefore can be a starting point to the development and categorisation of humouristic element in this research.

Furthermore, in developing the framework for applying humouristic element in the English classroom, it is also important to acknowledge the teachers' ability to



perform humorous content. Therefore, a humouristic model by Martin (2003) will act as a guide in order to allow lecturers to identify the reason to why should humours be apply in the English classroom. According to Martin (2003) an individual's sense of humour is based on the idea that humour is a multidimensional construct that can be broken down into four different facets or components which include (1) affiliative humour: Using humour to build and maintain social relationships, (2) self-enhancing humour: Using humour to cope with stress and adversity, (3) self-defeating humour: Using humour in a way that harms the self or others and (4) aggressive humour: Using humour to mock or ridicule others.

This study aims to uncover which types and component of humour is suitable to be implement in the Malaysian English classroom context whilst focusing to improve classroom management, learning environment, and classroom interaction. Hence, this study will develop a humouristic framework that can guide teachers to apply different types of humouristic element in their English language teaching.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework used in the research is based on Instructional Humour Processing Theory. This theory act as a guideline and reference for developing the humouristic element framework for English language teaching. The Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT) Wanzer & Irwin (2010), is a theory that involve how humour is being processed in a classroom. Humour is either accepted or rejected in the classroom, The Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT) focused into



what are the actions that educators need to do when humour is understood or misunderstood in a classroom.

This particular framework is selected to act as a reference in developing the humouristic element framework because of how it can demonstrate the flow and usage of humour in the classroom. The Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT) Wanzer & Irwin (2010) emphasize on the development of humour applied in the classroom. The development of humour in the classroom presented by The Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT) is illustrated on two different stages which is incongruity recognised and incongruity not recognised. Based on these two stages, humorous message are developed throughout the lesson. The Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT) is used in this research because it provides a framework for understanding how students perceive, evaluate, and respond to humour in the classroom, which is central to the study's focus on humour's role in English language teaching. The research seeks to understand how different elements of humour used by lecturers enhance the classroom.

The Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT) Wanzer & Irwin (2010) is crucial in explaining how students process these humour elements cognitively and behaviourally, helping to determine which aspect of humour are most effective in promoting engagement and learning. By applying The Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT), the research can analyse the stages through which students interpret humour, ensuring that it is relevant, appropriate, and conducive to learning outcomes. This theory complements the study's goal of developing the Humouristic Elements Framework (HumELT) by guiding educators on how to use humour in a way that





students will process positively, leading to enhanced classroom setting and improved learning experiences. IHPT also provides insights into why certain aspect of humour may fail or succeed, offering practical implications for English educators.

To support and strengthen the framework, the Multi-Dimensional Humour Modal (MDHM) Martin (2001) is used to specify the elements of humour that occurred in the classroom. This modal is used as an initial guide to determine what are the elements of humour that are being used in the classroom. The Multi-Dimensional Humour Modal (MDHM) is also included to determine what are the factors on the usage of humour in the classroom. The Multi-Dimensional Humour Model (MDHM) is used in this research because it provides a structured framework for analysing the diverse ways in which humour can influence English language teaching. the Multi-Dimensional Humour Modal (MDHM) Martin (2001) allows the research to categorize the different elements of humour that lecturers use and how they contribute to various aspects of teaching and learning. By incorporating this model, the study can systematically assess how humour affects student engagement, classroom management, and classroom environment. This comprehensive approach aligns with the study's goal of developing a Humouristic Elements Framework (HumELT), which aims to guide educators in effectively using humour in English language teaching context. The model's focus on multiple dimensions of humour occurred in the classroom and provides the depth needed to explore its pedagogical applications in the education context.

Both the Multi-Dimensional Humour Modal (MDHM) Martin (2001) and the Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT) Wanzer & Irwin (2010) are crucial to this research because they offer complementary perspectives on how humour functions





in English language teaching. The Multi-Dimensional Humour Model (MDHM) categorizes the elements of humour into different types, content, and styles. Hence, allowing for a detailed exploration of how lecturers use humour to enhance classroom interaction, environment, and management. Meanwhile, Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT) explains how students perceive, process, and respond to these different humour elements, ensuring that the humour used is effective and conducive to learning. Including both theory and model in the theoretical framework provides a comprehensive understanding on how the elements of humour is applied in the classroom.

The Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT) Wanzer & Irwin (2010) identifies the different elements of humour, while Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT) Wanzer & Irwin (2010) ensures they are pedagogically appropriate and processed positively by students. Together, they offer a well-rounded approach to developing the Humouristic Elements Framework (HumELT), guiding educators in integrating humour effectively into teaching practices.

### **1.8 Conceptual framework**

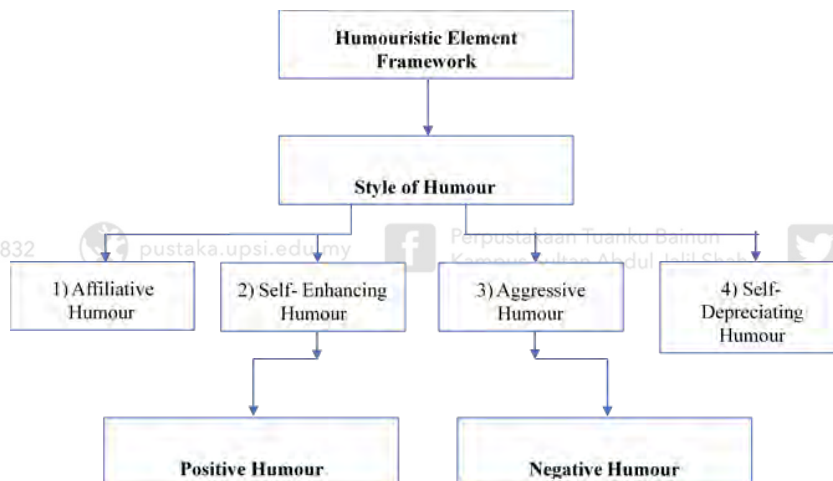
The key concepts in the conceptual framework of this research are types of humour, content of humour, and styles of humour, and their impact on classroom dynamics specifically, classroom interaction, environment, and management. These concepts are used to examine how humour is applied by English lecturers in Malaysian higher education and how it enhances the teaching and learning experience in English as a



Second Language (ESL) classrooms. The types of humour refer to various forms such as verbal, visual, auditory, and figural humour. The content of humour focuses on the actually content of the humour which can derieve from either culture-based humour, universal-based humour or linguistic-based humour. The styles of humour address how humour is delivered, whether it is affiliative humour, self-enhancing humour, aggressive humour, or self-depreciating humour.

**Figure 1.1**

*Initial Conceptual Humouristic Element Framework*



These concepts are central to the study because they allow the research to systematically explore how humour influences essential classroom elements like interaction, environment, and management. For instance, humour can encourage classroom interaction by breaking the ice and fostering student participation, especially in a language learning context where students may feel self-conscious. Similarly, humour contributes to a positive classroom environment, reducing anxiety and making students feel more comfortable, which can enhance their overall learning experience.



Humour aids in classroom management, helping lecturers maintain student attention and manage classroom behavior in a light-hearted, yet effective, manner. By including these key concepts in the conceptual framework, the research can comprehensively investigate how humour shapes the teaching process and impacts student engagement and learning outcomes.

Including a conceptual framework is relevant and important to this research because it provides a clear structure for exploring the relationship between humour and teaching effectiveness. The framework ensures that the study remains focused on specific concepts, guiding both data collection and analysis. Since the research uses a mixed-method design, consisting of surveys, classroom observations, and interviews, the conceptual framework helps organize and interpret both qualitative and quantitative data. It also aligns with the overall goal of the research, which is to develop a Humouristic Elements Framework (HumELT) that can guide educators in using humour effectively in ESL teaching. Without a conceptual framework, the study risks becoming too broad or unfocused, making it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions.

Additionally, the inclusion of a conceptual framework ensures that the research contributes valuable insights to the field of ESL teaching, where the role of humour has been largely unexplored. By clearly defining the key concepts and their relationships, the framework provides a foundation for future studies, encouraging further exploration of humour's impact on education. It also offers practical implications for teacher training programs, helping educators understand how to integrate humour into their teaching in a way that enhances student engagement and learning outcomes.





## 1.9 Limitation of Study

The research has three limitations which are the factor of time, reliance on purposive sampling and cultural specificity. Firstly, due to the research being funded by a grant of 2 years' period a limitation of time particularly in the duration of data collection and classroom observations. Since humour is highly contextual and can vary depending on the specific dynamics of the classroom, observing a limited number of sessions may not capture the full spectrum of how humour is utilized across different teaching periods. Additionally, since humour can evolve with ongoing classroom interaction, the data collected from a specific time frame may not reflect long-term trends or changes in humour use throughout the semester.



Secondly, the reliance on purposive sampling may limit the generalizability of

the findings. Therefore, the data mainly focuses on English lecturers in Malaysian higher education, consequently, the findings, particularly the Humouristic Elements Framework (HumELT), may not be applicable to all ESL teaching environments, limiting its potential broader adoption. Another limitation is the cultural specificity of the study. Since the research is conducted in a Malaysian higher education setting, the elements of humour identified may be influenced by cultural norms, both in terms of what is considered humorous and how humour is used in the classroom. The framework developed from this study may not be directly transferable to different cultural contexts where the role of humour in education is perceived differently. Future studies may be beneficial for the





### 1.10 Significant of The Study

Humour in teaching is often go unnoticed due to its nature of “inexpectancy”. Most humourous content or element which occurred in the classroom are often spontaneous and unpredictable, hence the reason why a particular “something” is funny is because of how humourous elements are able to “break” the pattern of learning. Because of this, humour in the classroom for most of the time may go unnoticed and are not considered as an “intentional” element in the teaching process. However, many studies that looked into the psychology of teaching and learning have been able to see a pattern of positive behaviour and atmosphere whenever humour is applied. According to Ekizer (2023) humour may bring three important positive behaviour in the English classroom which are motivation to learn, feeling relaxed while learning, and making things more memorable. Appropriate humour is relevant humour and appropriate humour happens at a suitable time and in a suitable manner (Bakar & Kumar 2019).

Moreover, learners may benefit from an opportunity to ask questions and practice participating in humourous or playful exchanges, Nuutinen (2019). Due to the nature of humour being able to set a “friendly” tone, learners may benefit from having the ability to participate whilst also reducing participation anxiety (Hennessy, 2023). Through the implementation of humour, it seemed to increase participation from the student, by simply making them feel more comfortable in the classroom. Another aspect that could be consider is the social benefit for the learners in the classroom. Humour reminds humans that they are social beings that crave to share moments and experience with other beings, humour is the bridge that connect individuals, (Gillis, 2023).



This research is significant in a way that it provides a guideline for lecturers specially in the Malaysian context to practice humour in the English classroom. According to Lovorn & Holaway (2015) using humour in the classroom helped create a positive classroom environment, which reduced the stress of the students and encouraged students to be more open to discussion. Bilokçuoğlu & Debreli (2018) humour has much potential in creating an affirmative environment, creates a more conducive learning environment (humanistic approach), and a more authentic environment. Therefore, there is a need to develop a framework which enables lecturers to navigate the use of humour in the teaching of English. A humouristic elements Framework (HumELT) will be developed in order to guide educators in using of humour in relation to facilitate the classroom.

### **1.11 Definition of Terms**

There are ten important terms which are discussed throughout the study which are the General Term of Humour (GTH), Humour in English Language Teaching (HumELT), Humour in English language learning (ELL), The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), The Instructional Humour Processing theory (IHPT), Multi-Dimensional Humour Model (MDHM), Language Skill in Humour (LSH), Incogruity Resolution Model (IRM), Humouristic Elements (HE), and Humour in Pedagogy (HiP).

Firstly, the General Term of Humour refers to the quality of being amusing or comical, often expressed in the form of jokes, satire, or witty language. Humour can be used as a tool for coping with difficult or stressful situations (coping mechanism), and



can also serve as a means of social bonding and communication. Humour is a tool which engage and spark interest to attract the audience. The general terms of humour associate with the act of laughter which is often relate with the theory of relief in humour. The theory of relief define humour as an act of releasing any form of negative energy. This shows that the purpose of humour is to allow negative energy in our body to be release.

Secondly, Humour in English Language Teaching (HumELT) refers to the use of humouristic element to attract, engage, manage, shape classroom environment, create tone, and set the mood of the classroom. Humour can be applied directly in the English language teaching to create activities and materials in the classroom which are engaging and appealing to the students. This can include using jokes, puns, riddles, cartoons, and other forms of playful language to help students understand and retain new vocabulary and grammar structures. Humour can also be used as a tool for building rapport between teachers and students, and for breaking down the barriers that can make language learning feel intimidating or unapproachable. By making learning more enjoyable and less stressful, humour can help students become more confident and motivated to continue studying English.

Thirdly, English language learning (ELL) refers to the memorable experience when humour is incorporated into the English language classroom. Humour, whether through jokes, puns, or playful wordplay, has a unique ability to capture learners' attention and make the learning journey more enjoyable. When instructors infuse their lessons with humour, students often find themselves more motivated and eager to participate. Moreover, humour can serve as a bridge between language learners and the cultural nuances embedded in English, helping them understand idioms, expressions,





and colloquialisms in context. It also fosters a positive and comfortable classroom atmosphere, encouraging students to take risks in language production without fear of making mistakes. In this way, humour not only makes the learning of English more effective but also turns it into a delightful and enriching experience.

The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), A theory proposed by Attardo and Raskin (1991) suggests that when we try to understand a joke or something funny, we rely on our understanding of language and our knowledge of the real world. GTVH examines why learners often find their teacher's humour amusing at the level of words and language. Students often find their instructor's use of verbal humour, like wordplay, irony, and puns, funny because these types of humour involve conflicting scripts. These scripts are like mental frameworks that contrast with each other, such as normal versus abnormal, real versus unreal, or possible versus impossible.

Furthermore, The Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT), introduced by Wanzer, Frymier, and Irwin (2009), underscores the significance of humour in educational contexts. IHPT posits that when educators effectively integrate humour into their teaching, it can yield a range of positive outcomes. This includes heightened student motivation, as humour can make learning more engaging and enjoyable. Moreover, humour captures students' attention, fostering a more focused learning environment. The theory also emphasizes the creation of a positive emotional climate in the classroom, reducing stress and enhancing memory retention. Additionally, well-applied humour can strengthen the teacher-student relationship, facilitate the comprehension of complex subjects, and bridge cultural considerations, although it must be used prudently to avoid offense or alienation.





The Multi-Dimensional Humour Model (MDHM) is a model that categorizes humour into multiple dimensions, recognizing that humour serves various functions and impacts individuals in different ways. There are four main aspect of the model which are affiliative humour, self-enhancing humour, aggressive humour, and self-depreciating humour. The MDHM is particularly relevant in educational settings as it allows educators to understand how different types of humour can be strategically applied to enhance teaching effectiveness, student engagement, and classroom atmosphere. By incorporating cognitive, emotional, and social elements of humour, educators can create a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment. In this research, the MDHM provides a theoretical foundation for identifying and analysing the humouristic elements used in classrooms context.



Moreover, the language skills involve in the study refers to the general English

language skills which are either writing, speaking, reading, or listening. General language skills that align with humour encompass a diverse range of linguistic abilities, all contributing to the art of understanding and appreciating humour. This includes proficiency in wordplay, where either lecturer or student understood puns, sarcasm, double meanings, and clever use of language to create comedic effects. Additionally, the general English language skills will look into the ability of the lecturer to convey humouristic elements in their teaching practices in improving learners speaking, listening, reading or writing skill.

In addition, the Incongruity-Resolution Model (IRM) is a cognitive framework that explains how humour arises from the perception of incongruity and its subsequent resolution. This model, widely referenced in humour research, suggests that humour





occurs when there is a discrepancy between an expected and an actual outcome, creating an element of surprise or contradiction. According to Suls (1972), humour is generated in two stages: first, an individual encounters an incongruity that disrupts their conventional expectations, and second, they resolve this incongruity by reinterpreting the situation in a way that restores coherence. This cognitive shift leads to amusement, as the resolution provides a sense of closure while maintaining the element of novelty. The IRM has been applied extensively in linguistic, psychological, and educational contexts, particularly in understanding how humour influences learning and communication. In language education, the IRM helps explain how jokes, puns, and humorous anecdotes function as pedagogical tools that enhance engagement, retention, and critical thinking. When students encounter humour based on linguistic or conceptual incongruities, they must actively process and resolve these discrepancies, reinforcing cognitive flexibility and comprehension skills.



Furthermore, researchers such as Attardo and Raskin (1991) have expanded upon the IRM by integrating it into the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), demonstrating its relevance in explaining verbal humour mechanics. In the context of English language teaching, understanding the IRM enables educators to incorporate humour strategically to reduce anxiety, foster a positive learning environment, and improve students' ability to recognize and interpret various linguistic structures. Additionally, empirical studies have supported the claim that humour based on incongruity resolution enhances memory retention and promotes deeper engagement with the learning material. Thus, the IRM serves as a crucial theoretical foundation for developing a humouristic element framework in language education, as it provides insight into how humour operates cognitively and how it can be harnessed for





pedagogical effectiveness. By applying the principles of incongruity and resolution, educators can design humour-based instructional strategies that align with students' cognitive processes, ultimately making language learning more enjoyable and effective.

Humouristic Elements (HE) refer to the various linguistic, cognitive, and contextual components that contribute to the creation, perception, and impact of humour in communication. In the context of English language teaching, HE can be categorized into three key elements: types of humour, content of humour, and style of humour. The types of humour encompass different forms such as verbal humour (puns, wordplay, irony), physical humour (slapstick, exaggerated gestures), and situational humour (unexpected events, misunderstandings). These types influence how humour is perceived and processed by learners. The content of humour refers to the thematic aspects of humorous material, which may include educational topics, cultural references, social situations, or everyday experiences that resonate with learners. The appropriateness and relevance of humour content play a vital role in ensuring that it enhances rather than hinders comprehension.

The style of humour pertains to the manner in which humour is delivered, including tone, timing, and expressive techniques such as sarcasm, exaggeration, or playful teasing. An effective humour style can make learning more engaging and interactive while fostering a positive classroom environment. Integrating HE into language education aligns with cognitive theories such as the Incongruity-Resolution Model (IRM), which explains humour as a process of detecting and resolving inconsistencies. By incorporating HE through a balanced combination of humour types, relevant content, and effective styles—educators can enhance student engagement,





reduce learning anxiety, and promote deeper linguistic and cognitive development in language learning.

Lastly, Humour in Pedagogy (HiP) refers to the deliberate and strategic use of humour as an instructional tool to enhance learning, engagement, and classroom interactions. It involves the integration of various humouristic techniques, such as jokes, wordplay, satire, irony, exaggeration, storytelling, and visual humour, to make learning experiences more enjoyable and effective. Research in education and psychology has consistently highlighted the positive impact of humour in reducing student anxiety, fostering motivation, and strengthening the teacher-student relationship. When used appropriately, HiP has the potential to create an inclusive and engaging learning environment that facilitates deeper cognitive processing and retention of knowledge.



HiP aligns with cognitive and affective learning theories, which emphasize the role of emotions in knowledge acquisition. Humour serves as a cognitive stimulant by introducing incongruities that challenge students' expectations, prompting them to resolve contradictions and reframe their understanding. This process aligns with the Incongruity-Resolution Model (IRM), which explains humour as a two-stage cognitive mechanism: first, the recognition of an unexpected contrast, and second, its resolution through reinterpretation. Engaging with humorous content encourages students to think critically, process information deeply, and develop problem-solving skills.

From an affective perspective, humour creates a supportive and relaxed learning atmosphere. Students who feel comfortable and less anxious are more likely to participate actively, ask questions, and engage with the lesson material. Research has





shown that humour in the classroom can increase student motivation and willingness to take intellectual risks, as it reduces the fear of making mistakes. Furthermore, laughter triggers the release of endorphins, which can alleviate stress and enhance overall well-being, contributing to a more positive educational experience.

HiP incorporates three key elements that define how humour is effectively applied in pedagogy which are the types of humour, content of humour, and style of humour. Types of Humour refer to the Humour in education can take various forms, including verbal humour (puns, jokes, sarcasm), situational humour (unexpected classroom events, role-playing), and physical humour (gestures, exaggerated expressions). Each type has distinct cognitive effects, and teachers must select the most suitable form based on the learning objectives and students' comprehension levels. For example, puns and wordplay can be particularly effective in English language teaching, as they reinforce linguistic awareness and enhance vocabulary retention.

Content of Humour is the appropriateness and relevance of humour in the English classroom. Humorous content should align with the subject matter, cultural background, and developmental level of students. Teachers must ensure that humour remains inclusive, respectful, and free from offensive or discriminatory elements. When humour is contextually relevant, it reinforces learning by making abstract or complex concepts more tangible and relatable. Style of Humour is a part of HiP. The effectiveness of humour also depends on its delivery, including the teacher's tone, timing, and expressiveness. A well-timed joke or humorous anecdote can capture students' attention and sustain their interest in the lesson. Conversely, forced or excessive humour





may disrupt the learning process. Teachers who naturally integrate humour into their teaching style can create a more dynamic and engaging classroom environment.

In English language instruction, HiP can serve as a valuable pedagogical strategy to enhance linguistic comprehension, creativity, and critical thinking. Humour-based activities, such as analyzing jokes, decoding puns, and engaging in playful storytelling, encourage students to explore multiple meanings and develop a deeper understanding of language structures. Additionally, humour can facilitate social interaction, as it promotes classroom collaboration and peer engagement. For example, when teaching idioms or figurative language, teachers can use humorous examples or cartoons to illustrate meanings in a memorable way. Similarly, incorporating humorous dialogues in reading and writing exercises can make the learning process more interactive and enjoyable. By integrating HiP, educators can transform the traditional classroom into a livelier and student-centered space, where learning is both effective and entertaining.

Humour in Pedagogy (HiP) is a powerful instructional tool that enhances both cognitive and affective learning outcomes. By strategically incorporating different types of humour, ensuring relevance in content, and refining the style of delivery, educators can create a positive and engaging classroom atmosphere. HiP aligns with cognitive theories such as the Incongruity-Resolution Model, reinforcing the role of humour in stimulating critical thinking and retention. When applied effectively in English language teaching, humour not only improves linguistic skills but also fosters motivation, collaboration, and deeper engagement with the learning material.





Ultimately, HiP contributes to a more enriching and enjoyable educational experience, making learning both meaningful and memorable.

### 1.12 Summary

Overall, the study will focus on identifying the humouristic element in the field of humour in general. The study will then narrow down to the specific types of humouristic elements implemented in the Malaysian ELT context. A humouristic element framework will be developed in order to enhance the three main aspect in the English classroom which are classroom management, classroom environment, and classroom interaction. The humouristic element framework aims to achieve comprehension in delivering humorous content hence aims to enhance language skills in general. The study begins by focusing on the broader field of humour, examining humouristic elements in a general sense to understand how humour functions in diverse settings. Humour has been a subject of interest across various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and education, but its specific role in language learning especially in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) remains relatively underexplored.

Therefore, by first identifying key humouristic elements from a broad perspective, the study establishes a foundation for understanding how humour operates in different contexts, including its cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions. This initial exploration is crucial for forming a comprehensive understanding of humour, which will later be applied specifically to language education. After establishing a general understanding of humouristic elements, the study will narrow its focus to the





specific types of humour used in Malaysian English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. The Malaysian context offers a unique environment for examining the use of humour in education, particularly because of its linguistic and cultural diversity.

In Malaysia, English is taught in a multilingual setting where students often speak multiple languages, and humour can play a key role in bridging cultural and linguistic differences. By examining how Malaysian ELT lecturers use humour, the study will identify the specific humouristic elements that are most effective in fostering engagement and learning. The study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys, classroom observations, and interviews to gather data from both lecturers and students, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how humour functions in the classroom. This narrowing of focus from general humour to the specific use of humour in Malaysian ELT classrooms allows the study to develop targeted insights that are directly relevant to improving ESL teaching practices.

Ultimately, the study aims to develop a Humouristic Elements Framework (HumELT) that will guide educators in using humour to enhance three key aspects of the classroom: classroom management, classroom environment, and classroom interaction. Classroom management refers to the strategies teachers use to maintain a productive and disciplined learning environment, and humour can be an effective tool for reducing tension and addressing behavioral issues in a non-confrontational way. A positive classroom environment, fostered through humour, can make students feel more comfortable and engaged, thereby enhancing their willingness to participate and learn. Classroom interaction is also key, as humour can encourage communication between students and teachers, making lessons more dynamic and interactive. By focusing on





these three areas, the HumELT framework will provide practical recommendations for educators on how to integrate humour in ways that support both student engagement and learning.

Furthermore, the HumELT framework is designed not only to improve classroom dynamics but also to enhance language skills. Humour, when used effectively, can make learning more enjoyable, which in turn can increase students' motivation and willingness to engage with the material. In language learning specifically, humour can serve as a tool to introduce new vocabulary, explain complex grammatical rules, and develop linguistic creativity. For instance, cognitive humour, such as wordplay, can help students develop a deeper understanding of language structure and nuance, while social humour can facilitate peer-to-peer interactions in English, offering real-world language practice. By making lessons more engaging and enjoyable through humour, the framework ultimately aims to improve students' comprehension and fluency in English, contributing to overall language skill development.

In addition to enhancing language skills, the framework also focuses on improving comprehension when delivering humorous content. This is essential because humour can sometimes be difficult to understand, especially for ESL learners who may be unfamiliar with certain cultural references or language-specific wordplay. The HumELT framework will provide strategies for ensuring that humorous content is accessible to all students, regardless of their language proficiency level. By doing so, it aims to prevent misunderstandings that could otherwise hinder the learning process. Additionally, it will offer guidelines for educators on how to tailor their use of humour





to suit different learning needs and language levels, ensuring that humour remains an effective and inclusive tool in the classroom.

In conclusion, the study will develop a comprehensive understanding of humouristic elements in general before narrowing its focus to their application in Malaysian ELT classrooms. Through the creation of the Humouristic Element Framework, the research aims to provide practical recommendations for using humour to enhance classroom management, environment, and interaction. The framework will serve as a valuable resource for educators, helping them to incorporate humour in ways that not only make learning more enjoyable but also support students' language development and overall classroom experience.

