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Humor as a Politeness Strategy in Informal Interactions among Master One EFL Learners at Echahid Cheikh Laarbi Tebessi University

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ABSTRACT

According to Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, politeness manages face-threatening acts to maintain social harmony, while humor, according to Martin's Humor Styles Questionnaire, fosters connection through positive styles like affiliative and self-enhancing humor. This study investigates how humor functions as a politeness strategy in informal interactions among Master One EFL learners at Laarbi Tebessi University. It is grounded in Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987) and Martin's Humor Style Questionnaire (2003), which together provide the theoretical foundation for analyzing politeness and humor strategies. It addresses the research problem of how learners use humor as a politeness strategy. To investigate the two main research questions, the first question aims to explore the types and functions of humor used, while the second question focuses on how humor is strategically employed as a politeness strategy. Adopting a qualitative approach, this study employs Conversation Analysis to examine spontaneous interactions collected through phone-recorded informal conversations. The population consists of Master One students specializing in Language Sciences, from which a sample of 13 participants was drawn to take part in three sessions, two group-specific and one joint session. The findings underscore humor's instrumental role in fostering smooth interaction. These insights demonstrate that humor effectively supports politeness by fostering rapport and reinforcing a sense of in-group identity, and advance the understanding of its pragmatic functions.

Keywords: humor, politeness strategy, EFL learners, informal interaction, conversation analysis, mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs)

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Dedication

Oh Allah, the source of comfort, ease, and mercy. To the One who is well aware of every tear drop, every laughter, every struggle, and every emotion. Every idea, every draft, and every letter written in this paper is Allah's mercy and guidance towards the end. All praise is due to Allah.

{وَآخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ}

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Dedication

بسم الله الرحمان الرحيم

{ نرفع دَرَجَٰتٖ مَّن نَّشَآءُ وَفَوۡقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلۡمٍ عَلِيمٞ }

*First and foremost, all praise is due to **Allah**, the Most Merciful, for His endless blessings and guidance throughout this journey.*

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And always remember, it is never too late.

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List of Abbreviations

CA – Conversational Analysis

CP – Cooperative Principle

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

FTAs – Face-threatening Acts

GTVH – The General Theory of Verbal Humor

HSQ – Humor Style Questionnaire

LA – Language

LM – Logical Mechanism

LS – Language Science

M1 – Master One (first year of the Master's degree)

NS – Narrative Strategy

P – Participant

PP – Politeness Principle

SI – Situation

SO – Script Opposition

SSTH – Semantic Script Theory of Humor

TA – Target

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Language is not merely a means of communication; it also serves as a powerful tool for social interaction and identity construction. Politeness and humor are key elements of how people connect and communicate. Politeness helps maintain social harmony by showing respect, consideration, or deference, whether through polite language, gestures, or behavior. Humor, meanwhile, adds playfulness, lightness, and sometimes clever subversion to interactions. When used together, they can ease tension, strengthen bonds, and even navigate delicate topics without direct confrontation. Across cultures, the balance of humor and politeness varies, but their shared purpose remains: keeping communication smooth, human, and often delightfully unpredictable. While both humor and politeness have independently garnered scholarly attention (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987; Dynel, 2009), several researchers (Bell, 2009; Dewaele, 2011; Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005) noted that their intersection, particularly in second language contexts, remains relatively underexplored, despite its significance for understanding pragmatic competence and face management in L2 interaction. In the Algerian EFL context, where English is learned primarily within academic settings, learners often engage in informal peer interactions in which they may employ humor strategically to maintain face. This study examines how these learners utilize humor to convey politeness in these interactions.

2. Statement of the Problem

Although extensive research exists on politeness strategies and humor as separate domains, scholars such as Bell (2009), Dewaele (2011), and Márquez Reiter and Placencia (2005) argued that their intersection, particularly within second language contexts, remains relatively underexplored. Few studies have specifically examined how humor operates as a politeness strategy within EFL contexts, despite calls from scholars such as Bell (2009), Dewaele (2011), and Márquez Reiter and Placencia (2005) for more research in this area. Among Algerian EFL learners, pragmatic competence, especially in informal interactions,

remains a challenge due to limited exposure to native-like conversational norms. The risk of pragmatic failure is heightened when learners attempt to use humor without fully understanding the sociocultural cues involved. This lack of research becomes particularly noticeable when analyzing peer conversations in informal academic settings, where humor may serve as a tool to avoid confrontation, express disagreement politely, or reinforce solidarity. The absence of focused inquiry into how Algerian EFL learners deploy humor to achieve these ends highlights a gap this study seeks to address.

3. Aims of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to explore how Master One EFL learners at Laarbi Tebessi University use humor as a politeness strategy during informal conversations. It focuses on identifying the types and functions of humor employed and analyzing how they contribute to face management, rapport building, and the maintenance of social harmony within EFL outside classroom contexts.

4. Research Question

This study is guided by two main questions:

1: What are the types and functions of humor used by Master One EFL learners at Laarbi Tebessi University?

2: How do Master One EFL learners at Laarbi Tebessi University use humor as a politeness strategy in their informal interactions?

5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the broader understanding of how humor functions within the realm of pragmatic competence in EFL settings. As humor is often excluded from formal language curricula, a concern was raised by several scholars, such as Bell (2009) who highlighted that humor is largely neglected in second language teaching materials, despite its significance in real-life communication.

Dewaele and Wei (2013) similarly argued that formal instruction tends to prioritize grammatical accuracy over sociolinguistic elements like humor. Norrick (2009) also pointed out that humor is rarely treated as a teachable skill in language education, leaving learners underprepared for authentic interactions. This research highlights its importance as a social and linguistic resource for learners navigating interpersonal communication in informal settings.

6. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design grounded in conversational analysis. The sample consisted of 13 participants drawn from the total population of Master One students specializing in Language Sciences. The data were collected through phone recordings of spontaneous, informal interactions among the participants. The recordings were then transcribed and analyzed using politeness theory, particularly the framework developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), as well as the Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ) developed by Martin (2003). The participants were selected through purposive, snowball sampling to ensure their active engagement in the types of interactions being studied. The analysis focused on identifying the functions of humor within these interactions and how it contributes to politeness strategies.

7. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into two chapters. The current section introduces the research topic, presents the background, outlines the problem, states the aims, formulates the research questions, and significance of the study, and describes the methodology. Chapter One provides a comprehensive review of the literature relevant to politeness theories, humor theories, their intersection, and its settings in informal interactions. Chapter Two, first section outlines the methodological framework, including the research design, data collection procedures, and the analytical strategies. Chapter Two, second section discusses the findings

of the study, offering a detailed analysis of how humor is used as a politeness strategy in the observed conversations. Chapter Two last section highlights the discussion, the implications of the findings, and provides recommendations for future research. Lastly, the General Conclusion which concludes the study.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review outlines the theoretical and empirical foundations underlying the intersection of politeness and humor in interpersonal communication, drawing on key frameworks of politeness theories such as Lakoff (1973), Grice (1975), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1987). Humor is seen through the Incongruity, Superiority, and Relief Theories, and Martin's (2003) typology of humor styles, emphasizing its role in easing tension and fostering solidarity. This literature review investigates how humor contributes to politeness in interpersonal communication, providing a theoretical foundation for analyzing the ways speakers use humor to manage face and navigate social interaction.

1.1 Section One: Theoretical Framework of Politeness

From early rules-based approaches to more nuanced understandings of social interaction. The study of politeness in pragmatics has been significantly advanced by the influential works, such as Lakoff (1973), Grice (1975), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1987) theories. Each one offering a distinct perspective on how language users manage interpersonal relations through polite communication.

1.1.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics, a central subfield within linguistics, examines how meaning is constructed and interpreted concerning context, speaker intention, social relationships, and situational factors. The understanding of pragmatics has been significantly shaped by several influential scholars, each offering distinct yet complementary perspectives Geoffrey Leech

(1983) defined pragmatics as “the study of meaning in relation to speech situations” (Leech, 1983, p. 13). This means that pragmatics focuses on how context influences the way language is understood and used, and looks beyond the literal meanings of words to examine how speakers convey meaning depending on who they’re talking to, where, when, and why. How meaning is shaped by the situation in which communication occurs. Additionally, Gorge Yule (1996, p.3) described pragmatics as “the study of speaker meaning,” concentrating on how speakers’ intentions shape interpretation.

1.1.2 Definition of Politeness

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, politeness is “Behavior that is respectful and considerate of other people” (OED, n.d.). This definition highlights the social aspect of politeness; it’s about showing respect and care for others through one’s words and actions. Politeness definition has evolved through the contributions of numerous scholars, reflecting its complex and multifaceted nature. Lakoff (1973) and Holmes (1995) have described it using everyday language. Lakoff (1973, p.64), one of the pioneers in the field, defined politeness based on the premise that language serves to manage social relationships and ensure smooth communication across various social contexts, primarily by reducing friction. Additionally, Holmes (1995, p. 3) characterized politeness as demonstrating respect and avoiding imposition or control over others, often through maintaining social distance and avoiding humiliation. Other scholars have employed more specific theoretical terminology. For example, Yule (1996, p. 61), described politeness as an awareness of another person’s public self-image, or ‘face,’ which is influenced by the relationship between interlocutors. This relationship spectrum ranges from closeness (e.g., friendship, solidarity) to social distance (e.g., teacher-student relationship). Furthermore, Leech (2014, p. ix) acknowledged the vagueness inherent in defining politeness, noting contrasting views: some perceive it as merely a decorative linguistic feature, while others, including Leech himself, consider it

essential for respectful and socially acceptable communication. However, critiques from later politeness research (e.g., Watts, 2003; Eelen, 2001) distinguished between lay notions of politeness1 and politeness2. Eelen (2001) emphasizes politeness as a social evaluation rather than an inherent quality of utterances.

1.1.3 Politeness Theories

Politeness1 refers to the observable and conventional aspects of polite behavior, such as using formal language, courteous expressions, or a respectful tone. It focuses on linguistic forms and social norms that signal politeness on the surface, like saying "please" or using indirect questions. This type of politeness is often culture-specific and reflects what is traditionally considered "good manners" in a given society (Watts, Ide, & Ehlich, 1992). Furthermore, the theoretical construct politeness2 is more concerned with the speaker's intention to show consideration for the listener's feelings, desires, or autonomy. It goes beyond surface expressions and is rooted in the desire to maintain social harmony, avoid conflict, or show empathy. This form of politeness is more strategic and context-dependent, aligning closely with the deeper social functions of communication (Watts et al., 1992). Politeness theories explore how language is used to maintain social harmony and show respect. Early or "first wave" approaches, including those by Lakoff (1973), Grice (1975), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1987) laid foundational frameworks for understanding politeness in communication. These models focused on rules, principles, and strategies that guide polite behavior. However, more recent "second wave" and "third wave" research has expanded and challenged these earlier theories, offering more nuanced and context-sensitive perspectives on politeness.

1.1.3.1 Lakoff's Theory of Politeness

Lakoff (1973, pp. 64-65) provided one of the earliest systematic treatments of politeness within generative linguistics, conceptualizing it as the use of language to minimize

friction in interpersonal relations. She proposed that politeness involves adhering to specific rules or strategies to demonstrate respect, prevent conflict, and maintain communicative harmony. Lakoff (1973, p. 297) initially proposed a model incorporating three key rules for polite communication:

- **Rule 1:** Don't impose: Avoid forcing views or actions on others; maintain formality and distance.
- **Rule 2:** Give options: Allow the listener autonomy and the freedom to make their own choices; use hedges or mitigate requests.
- **Rule 3:** Make A feel good – be friendly: Foster rapport and camaraderie; show interest and approval.

Rule 1 often manifests through linguistic choices that create distance, such as using passive constructions or impersonal language. Rule 2 involves showing deference by allowing the listener freedom, often achieved through hesitant language, tag questions, or hedges. Rule 3 focuses on building solidarity and positive rapport. These rules can be applied individually or concurrently depending on the context and the relationship between speakers. In her later works (1975, p. 65; 1977, p. 88), Lakoff refined these guidelines by distinguishing between communication primarily focused on clarity, which is typically governed by Gricean maxims, and communication where social factors take precedence, which is governed by politeness rules. She argued that while clarity and politeness can sometimes align, politeness often overrides clarity when they conflict. That means that although clarity, being direct and easy to understand, and politeness, being respectful and considerate, can work together in communication, they don't always go hand in hand. When there's a conflict, such as when saying something clearly might sound too blunt or rude, politeness tends to take priority. In such cases, speakers may choose to be less direct or use vague or softened language, for example hints, hedges, or indirectness to avoid offending the

listener or causing discomfort. So, even if the message becomes less clear, maintaining a polite tone is often seen as more socially important, suggesting politeness is a fundamental aspect of communication, deeply intertwined with social context (Lakoff & Ide, 2005, pp. 8-9).

1.1.3.2 Grice's Cooperative Principle and Its Relation to Politeness

Effective communication relies not only on linguistic competence but also on shared assumptions about how conversation works. Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP) and associated conversational maxims form a foundational framework in pragmatics, outlining rational principles for efficient information exchange. Grice (1975, p. 45) proposed that participants in conversation normally adhere to the CP: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." This principle is elaborated through four maxims (Grice, 1975, pp. 45-46):

1. **Maxim of Quantity:** Be as informative as required, but no more.
2. **Maxim of Quality:** Be truthful; do not say what you believe to be false or lack evidence for.
3. **Maxim of Relation:** Be relevant.
4. **Maxim of Manner:** Be clear, brief, and orderly; avoid obscurity and ambiguity.

While Grice's framework primarily addresses informational efficiency, it becomes highly relevant to politeness when speakers deviate from these maxims. Politeness theories often analyze polite utterances (e.g., indirect requests, hedges, compliments) as instances where speakers deliberately depart from Grecian maxim to generate conversational implicatures, thereby conveying politeness alongside the literal meaning (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983). Therefore, Grice's CP provides a baseline of rational

communication against which the socially motivated deviations typical of politeness can be understood and analyzed.

1.1.3.3 Leech's Politeness Principle and Maxims

Leech (1983) proposed a model of politeness that explicitly works alongside Grice's CP. He argued that while the CP explains how information is efficiently conveyed, the Politeness Principle (PP) explains why people are often indirect, seemingly uncooperative, or overly expressive in conversation, to maintain social equilibrium and friendly relations. Leech suggested that politeness involves balancing the demands of the CP with the social goals addressed by the PP.

Leech (1983, pp. 132-133) operationalized the PP through six interpersonal maxims, framed in terms of minimizing cost and maximizing benefit to the *s,* that refers to the speaker, and *h,* that refers to the hearer. These maxims guide the *s* to minimize the expression of impolite beliefs (e.g., criticism, disagreement, requests imposing on the *h*) and maximize the expression of polite beliefs (e.g., compliments, agreement, offers benefiting the *h*). The maxims are summarized below.

- **Tact Maxim:** According to Leech (1983, p. 107), the Tact Maxim encourages speakers to minimize cost to the hearer and maximize benefit to the hearer. This maxim is particularly relevant in the use of directives (such as requests) and commissives (such as offers or promises), where politeness often requires softening the imposition. For instance, the indirect request "Could you answer the phone?" is considered more polite than the direct command "Answer the phone," as it reduces the perceived imposition on the hearer.
- **Generosity Maxim:** As described by Leech (1983, p. 133), focuses on the speaker (s), encouraging them to minimize benefit to themselves and maximize cost to themselves. This maxim serves as the counterpart to the Tact Maxim and is especially

relevant in commissive speech acts, such as offers and promises. For example, the polite expression “You must come and have dinner with us” is preferred over the less polite alternative “We must come and have dinner with you,” as the former emphasizes generosity by placing the benefit on the hearer.

- **Approbation Maxim:** According to Leech (1983, p. 135), the Approbation Maxim directs speakers to minimize dispraise of the hearer and maximize praise of the hearer. This maxim promotes the use of compliments and the avoidance of direct criticism, thereby reinforcing social harmony and positive face. An example is the utterance “What a marvelous meal you cooked!” which illustrates an effort to highlight the hearer’s achievements and show appreciation.
- **Modesty Maxim:** The Modesty Maxim, as outlined by Leech (1983, p. 136), focuses on minimizing praise of the speaker and maximizing dispraise of the speaker. It encourages humility and self-effacement, often through downplaying one’s own contributions or achievements. For instance, in the exchange “A: They were so kind to us; B: Yes, they were, weren’t they,” speaker B avoids drawing attention to themselves and instead affirms the positive qualities of others.
- **Agreement Maxim:** Leech (1983, p. 138) identifies the Agreement Maxim as the principle that speakers should minimize disagreement with the hearer and maximize agreement. This maxim supports the maintenance of rapport and cooperative interaction by promoting alignment and the search for common ground. For example, instead of responding with a direct “No,” a speaker may use a softened form such as “Yes, but…” to reduce the face threat posed by overt disagreement.
- **Sympathy Maxim:** The Sympathy Maxim, described by Leech (1983, p. 138), encourages speakers to minimize expressions of antipathy and maximize expressions of sympathy toward the hearer. This includes showing empathy, compassion, or

emotional support in moments of significance, whether joyful or sorrowful. A typical example is the phrase “I’m sorry to hear about your loss,” which demonstrates concern and emotional solidarity with the hearer.

Leech (1983) emphasized that these maxims vary in degree and are context-dependent, operating on a cost-benefit continuum. Their application differs across situations and cultures. He also highlighted the inherent asymmetry in politeness acts and noted that politeness can extend to third parties (Leech, 1983, pp. 131-139). Leech’s framework provides a detailed account of how speakers navigate the trade-off between clarity, which refers to the quality of being direct, unambiguous, and easy to understand in communication, and social goals, offering explanations for various forms of indirectness and polite expressions.

1.1.3.4 Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory

Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory, which was originally presented as a shorter journal article in 1978, remains arguably the most influential framework in politeness research. Locher (2004) noted it “can easily be called the most influential contribution to this field of research,” underlining its foundational role. It provides a detailed model explaining how speakers use language to manage social relationships.

Brown and Levinson (1987) developed their model based on the concept of “Face” drawing from Goffman’s (1967) sociological work and the English folk notion of ‘losing/saving face’. They have defined face as the public self-image that every member of a society claims for themselves. This image is socially constructed, emotionally invested, and requires constant maintenance through interaction (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). They proposed that face consists of two universal, complementary aspects, which are the negative face and the positive face that are detailed below:

- **Negative Face:** refers to an individual's desire for autonomy, specifically, the wish to act freely and to be free from imposition or interference by others. It reflects the need for autonomy, personal space, independence, face needs, recognizing the mutual vulnerability of face (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61).
- **Positive Face:** Reflects the desire for social connection, appreciation, and belonging. It involves seeking approval, emphasizing shared values, and fostering warmth in interactions, instead of minimizing imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61).

1- Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs)

Many communicative acts like orders, criticisms, disagreements, complaints, apologies, ect, inherently carry the potential to damage or threaten the face wants of either the speaker or the hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987, pp. 65-68) termed these 'face-threatening acts' (FTAs) which threaten:

a. **Hearer's Negative Face:** Acts like orders, requests, suggestions, advice and warnings impede the hearer's autonomy by placing pressure on them to act in a certain way, thereby limiting their freedom of choice or action.
b. **Hearer's Positive Face:** Acts like criticism, disapproval, disagreement, contradictions and raising taboo topics challenge the hearer's positive face by undermining their self-image, questioning their values or opinions, or threatening their sense of acceptance and belonging within a social group.
c. **Speaker's Negative Face:** Acts like making offers, promises (committing to future action) and expressing thanks threaten the speaker's negative face by voluntarily limiting their own future freedom of action or accepting an obligation, which may reduce their autonomy.
d. **Speaker's Positive Face:** Acts like apologies, confessions and accepting compliments threaten the speaker's positive face by exposing personal shortcomings, admitting

fault, or appearing self-congratulatory, which can make them vulnerable to judgment or social discomfort.

1.1.3.5 Facework

The concept of facework, first introduced by Goffman (1967), refers to the strategies and communicative behaviors individuals employ to construct, maintain, defend, or negotiate face. In Goffman's framework, "face" is the positive social value a person claims for themselves through the roles they perform and how they are perceived by others during interaction. According to Goffman (1967), facework, therefore, includes any verbal or non-verbal behavior aimed at managing the self-image in the eyes of others.

Building on Goffman's work, scholars such as Lim and Bowers (1991) and Domenici and Littlejohn (2006) have expanded the concept to highlight that facework is not only about preserving one's own face but also about attending to the face needs of others. This dual concern for self and other lies at the heart of politeness theory. According to Goffman (1967), in social interactions, people often engage in preventive facework (to avoid threats to face) or corrective facework (to repair face once it has been threatened).

Therefore, facework is a fundamental mechanism through which politeness is enacted, negotiated, and understood in communication. A clear understanding of facework provides critical insight into how speakers balance clarity and social sensitivity, making it a vital concept in any study of politeness.

In the context of politeness research, particularly in the Brown and Levinson (1987) model, facework plays a central role. Their politeness strategies are essentially types of facework designed to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs). For example, using indirect language to issue a request helps protect the hearer's negative face, while using compliments or expressions of solidarity can support the hearer's positive face.

1.1.3.6 FTA Weightiness

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 74) identified three key sociocultural variables that influence the level of threat posed by a face-threatening act (FTA): (1) the social distance (D) between the speaker and the hearer, understood as a symmetrical relationship; (2) the relative power (P) between the speaker and the hearer, which is imbalanced; and (3) the rank of imposition (R), which refers to how burdensome the specific FTA (x) is within a given culture. These factors are combined in the formula Wx = D(S,H) + P(S,H) + Rx, where Wx represents the overall weight or seriousness of the FTA. According to Brown and Levinson (pp. 74–81), this calculated risk level determines which politeness strategy is appropriate, the greater the threat, the more elaborate or indirect the strategy that will be selected.

- **Social Distance (D):** The degree of familiarity/intimacy vs. distance/formality between speaker (S) and hearer (H).
- **Relative Power (P):** The perceived power asymmetry between S and H.
- **Rank of Imposition:** The culturally specific degree to which the act itself is considered an imposition in that context.

The formula Wx (W = weightiness; x= context) = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + Rx suggests that the greater the distance, the greater the hearer's power, and the higher the rank of imposition, the weightier the FTA, and thus the more likely the speaker is to use more indirect or elaborate politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 76).

1.1.4 Politeness Strategies

Brown and Levinson's politeness theory outlines four main strategies that speakers use to manage FTAs in interaction. Positive Politeness strategy focuses on building rapport and expressing friendliness or solidarity. Negative Politeness strategy emphasizes respect for the listener's autonomy and aims to minimize imposition. Bald-on-Record strategy involves being direct and unambiguous, often used when urgency or clarity outweighs social concerns.

Finally, Bald-off-Record strategy relies on indirectness and implication, allowing the speaker to avoid direct responsibility for potentially FTAs.

1.1.4.1 Positive Politeness Strategy

This subcategory indicates the individual desire to be socially accepted, and the wish for their self-image to be acknowledged. According to Brown and Levinson, (1987, p. 62), positive face is "the want of every member that his [her] wants be desirable to at least some others," People's aspirations be loved, gain loyalty and good education are what they want to maintain, alongside things they want to do, such as watching movies, staying home and study. These wishes resemble a big part of one's social identity, or 'face', that people want to maintain with others. For instance, if someone wants to take the role of a project group leader, they wish to be supported while maintaining their positive face, and their personal goal. To exemplify this concept, Mrs. B, a passionate gardener, who is very proud of the quality of her roses, seeks admiration from visitors. When she is praised for her work, Mrs. B feels gratified, because of her recognized and respected goals and achievements. This highlights the concept of positive politeness, where societal appreciation is highly requested.

Positive Politeness Sub-strategy

Brown and Levinson (1987) developed a framework of 15 positive politeness strategies aimed at satisfying the hearer's positive face by emphasizing solidarity, expressing approval, and building rapport in social interactions.

- **Strategy 1:** Speakers should acknowledge noticeable positive aspects of the hearer's situation or possessions that the hearer likely wants to be recognized and appreciated. For example, "You must be hungry, it's a long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 103).

- **Strategy 2:** Exaggerated speech like intonation or stress, and intensifiers. For instance, “He built the house terrifyingly” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 105).
- **Strategy 3:** Speakers can make their contributions more engaging by sharing their desires through compelling storytelling, sometimes using the ‘vivid present’. Example, ”I come down the stairs, and what do you think I see? — a huge mess all over the place, the phone’s off the hook and clothes are scattered all over…” (Brown and Levinson ,1983, p. 106).
- **Strategy 4:** Using in-group identity markers like address forms. Example of which, “Here mate, I was keeping that seat for a friend of mine…” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 107).
- **Strategy 5:** Builds common ground by agreeing with the hearer, often through repetition. For instance, “John went to London this weekend! B: To London!” Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 113).
- **Strategy 6:** Avoiding disagreement, the speaker may use “token agreement,” responding in ways that appear agreeable while subtly expressing disagreement. For example: “Yes, but…’ in effect, rather than a blatant ‘No’.” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, pp. 113-114).
- **Strategy 7:** Spending time with the hearer as a sign of friendship allows the speaker to soften a FTAs by initially discussing unrelated topics. Discussing shared interests also provides opportunities to emphasize common ground and attitudes. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 117).
- **Strategy 8:** Joking can be purposefully used to manipulate politeness, as well as to reduce the seriousness of the situation. Example: “OK if I tackle those cookies now?” (Brown and Levinson, p. 124).

- **Strategy 9:** Asserting shared wants and the hearer's willingness to accommodate them can pressure the hearer to cooperate with the speaker, implying their cooperative relationship. As an example, “Look, I know you want the car back by 5.0, so should(not) I go to town now? (request)” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 125).
- **Strategy 10:** Speaker uses offers and promises to show alignment with the hearer’s wants, easing FTAs and supporting the hearer positive face. For example, “I’ll drop by sometime next week” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 125).
- **Strategy 11:** Assuming the hearer shares the speaker’s desires and will help achieve them (for the speaker, or both) can imply a reciprocal expectation of cooperation, suggesting a mutual benefit. For instance “Wait a minute, you haven’t brushed your hair! (as husband goes out of the door)” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 126).
- **Strategy 12:** Using “we” when meaning “you” or “me” can invoke cooperation and soften FTAs. Example of which, “Let’s have a cookie, then. (i.e. me)” or “Let’s get on with dinner, eh? (i.e., you)” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 127).
- **Strategy 13:** Providing reasons for a request helps involve the hearer demonstrating the reasonableness of the request and implying a mutual willingness to help. For instance, “Why not lend me your cottage for the weekend?” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 128).
- **Strategy 14:** Claiming cooperation can also involve highlighting reciprocal rights or obligations, like offering a favor in exchange or reminding the hearer of a past favor. This softens FTAs by framing them as part of a balanced exchange, reducing the sense of imposition or criticism. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 129).
- **Strategy 15:** Tangible gifts shows understanding of the hearer’s needs, as well as actions that satisfy relational wants like being listened to and understood. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 129).

1.1.4.2 Negative Politeness Strategy

The individual seeks to maintain personal autonomy and avoid imposition; therefore, negative face, which is reflecting independence and the freedom to act without constraint, is closely associated with conventional notions of politeness. Negative politeness strategy involves addressing the aspect of the hearer's face by demonstrating respect for their personal space and minimizing pressure to act, thereby acknowledging their desire for autonomy (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 70). Moreover, this kind of politeness is formal, careful and modest. It focuses on the listener's wish not to be interrupted or controlled. When a speaker performs an act that may threaten the listener's independence, they often reduce its impact by apologizing, using indirect or respectful language, or expressing the message in a less personal way, such as through the passive voice. These ways help softening the impact of the request or statement and give the hearer a way to respond without feeling forced.

Sub-Strategies of Negative Politeness Strategy

Brown and Levinson (1987) developed a framework of 10 negative politeness strategies aimed to respect the hearer's negative face by minimizing imposition, acknowledging social distance, and allowing the hearer freedom of action and choice.

- **Strategy 1:** Speakers balancing directness and indirectness often use conventional indirectness which refers to expressions that are linguistically indirect but socially recognized as conventional ways of performing certain speech acts, such as making a request, offering advice, or giving an order. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 132).
- **Strategy 2:** Hedging helps the speaker avoid making an imposition and allows the hearer to retain their freedom of action. As Brown and Levinson exemplified, "I rather think it's hopeless." (Brown and Levinson, 1987,p. 145).

- **Strategy 3:** Apologizing is a speaker's effort to address actions that negatively affected the hearer's face, demonstrating respect and maintaining social bonds. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 173).
- **Strategy 4:** To show non-imposition, speakers can phrase FTAs with an agent other than "I" (or not just "I"), addressing someone other than "you" or using "we" inclusively, thus avoiding direct "I" and "you" pronouns. (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 176).
- **Strategy 5:** Reducing the force of a FTA by framing it as a general rule or obligation, rather than a personal decision. For example, "Passengers will please refrain from flushing toilets on the train", instead of "You will please refrain from flushing toilets on the train." (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 178).
- **Strategy 6:** In English, higher levels of negative politeness are linked to more noun-like, and thus more formal, language. Considering the following: "You performed well on the examinations and we were favorably impressed," instead of "Your performing well on the examinations impressed us favorably." (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 187).
- **Strategy 7:** The speaker can soften a FTA either by expressing gratitude or deference to the hearer, or by making it clear that the hearer is not obliged in any way. For instance, "I'd be eternally grateful if you would…", or "I'll never be able to repay you if you…". (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 190).
- **Strategy 8:** This strategy involves presenting the request or imposition as a universally recognized or impersonal necessity, rather than a direct personal demand. By framing the FTA as a general rule or obligation, the speaker distances themselves and the hearer from the specific imposition, thereby reducing the direct threat to the

hearer's autonomy. For example, instead of "Please close the door," one might say "The door should be closed for safety." (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 206).

- **Strategy 9:** This strategy involves turning verbs into nouns or using more abstract noun phrases to describe the FTA. Nominalization makes the action seem less personal, less direct, and thus less imposing. For instance, instead of "I request that you help me," a speaker might say "I would appreciate your assistance." The use of a noun like "assistance" makes the request feel less like a direct command (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 207).
- **Strategy 10:** This strategy involves explicitly acknowledging that the speaker is creating a debt by making a request, or conversely, assuring the hearer that they are not being indebted. This highlights the speaker's awareness of the imposition and their willingness to either compensate for it or remove any obligation on the hearer's part. Examples include "I'd be eternally grateful if you could…" or "Don't feel obliged to say yes, but…" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 209).

1.1.4.3 Bald-On-Record Strategy

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 74), the bald-on-record strategy is used when a speaker expresses themselves in a direct, clear, and concise manner without attempting to soften the impact of the message. This strategy is typically employed when the FTAs is either deemed unimportant or intentionally left unmitigated. There are two primary motivations for using this strategy: in one case, the speaker chooses not to minimize the threat because it is considered insignificant or deliberately ignored; in the other case, the speaker attempts to mitigate the threat through contextual cues or tone rather than explicit linguistic softeners. Brown and Levinson (1987 p. 100) illustrated this concept by stating that direct commands (imperatives) are a prototypical example of bald-on-record communication.

However, such commands can sometimes be softened by incorporating polite language or hedging devices.

1.1.4.4 Bald-Off-Record Strategy

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 216) explained that the off-record strategy gives the hearer full freedom to interpret the speaker's intended meaning. In this approach, the speaker deliberately avoids clear or direct expression, often using statements with multiple possible interpretations. This strategy provides the hearer with space and ambiguity, reducing the speaker's responsibility for any face-threatening implications.

Brown and Levinson (1987, pp. 230-232) identified two main types of off-record strategies. The first includes indirect hints, such as giving clues, making assumptions, using understatement or overstatement, repetition, contradictions, irony, metaphors, and rhetorical questions. The second type involves ambiguity and vagueness, including overgeneralizations, shifting attention, or delivering incomplete or unclear statements.

1.1.4.5 Moving Beyond the First Wave of Politeness

First wave politeness theories have long served as a foundational model in pragmatics and sociolinguistics. However, it has also drawn sustained criticism, encouraging the exploration of alternative approaches. Culpeper (2011) and Grainger (2011), although working independently and unaware of one another, each identified roughly the same distinctions between the waves at around the same time. Categorized the evolution of politeness theory into three broad "waves," each reflecting shifts in theoretical and methodological priorities.

First-wave research, marked by Grice's maxims, Lakoff's rules, Leech's framework and Brown and Levinson's face theory. Brown and Levinson conceptualized politeness as a set of rational, strategic choices speakers make to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs). Rooted in Gricean pragmatics and speech act theory, this model assumes universality,

prioritizes speaker intention, and treats face as a stable, individual possession. Over time, these assumptions were challenged for their cultural bias, static view of interaction, and narrow focus on mitigation strategies.

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1.1.4.6 Second Wave: Cultural and Evaluative Critiques

The second wave, which gained prominence in the 1990s and early 2000s, addressed these limitations by introducing more culturally sensitive and interaction-focused models. Mao (1994) critiqued the Anglo-centric nature of Brown and Levinson's framework, offering instead a model based on the Chinese concepts of miànzi and liǎn. His "relative face orientation" accounted for the interplay between individual autonomy and social identity across cultural contexts.

Eelen (2001) further challenged the speaker-oriented bias of first-wave theory, arguing that politeness is not simply about speaker intention but involves hearer evaluation. He emphasized the evaluative dimension of politeness, proposing a critical distinction between politeness1 (folk notions) and politeness2 (analytical constructs). According to Eelen (2001), early models often confused normative assumptions with theoretical insights, treating politeness as inherently positive and strategic. Watts (2003) expanded on this by asserting

that much of what Brown and Levinson categorized as “polite” was often perceived by participants as merely appropriate or unmarked behavior.

Locher and Watts (2005) introduced the notion of relational work, which encompasses the full range of interactional efforts to manage relationships, whether perceived as polite, impolite, or appropriate. This broadened the analytical lens, shifting the focus from pre-defined FTAs to the negotiation of meaning and social positioning in context.

1.1.4.7 Third Wave: Interactional and Discursive Expansion

The third wave, emerging in the early 2000s, integrated second-wave critiques while introducing new analytical priorities. A major development was the systematic study of impoliteness. Culpeper (1996, 2011) argued that impoliteness should be treated as a distinct phenomenon, with its own strategies aimed at damaging face, rather than simply as a failure of politeness. This reframing expanded the field to include a fuller spectrum of relational dynamics.

Third-wave researchers focus on how politeness and impoliteness are co-constructed in discourse and evaluated within specific interactional contexts. Terkourafi (2005) argued that politeness should not be seen as something that speakers intentionally choose from a set of universal strategies like that of Brown and Levinson, but rather as something that emerges from patterns of language use that are conventionalized within specific social contexts. Kádár and Haugh (2013) emphasized the importance of participant orientations, arguing that politeness emerges through social interaction rather than being embedded in isolated utterances.

Grainger (2011) underscored the need for frameworks that recognize reflexivity, which refers to the ability of speakers to consciously reflect on and adjust their communicative behavior based on the interactional context. Variability, acknowledges that politeness is not fixed or uniform but differs across individuals, communities, situations, and

even within a single interaction. Alongside hybridity, which highlights how different politeness norms, cultural expectations, and discursive practices often mix or overlap in real communication, especially in multilingual or multicultural settings. Grainger (2011) cautioned against conflating first-order and second-order understandings of politeness, advocating for approaches that remain sensitive to both. First-order understandings refer to the everyday, commonsense notions of politeness as understood and used by language users in real-life interactions, such as saying "please," "thank you," or avoiding directness out of courtesy. In contrast, second-order understandings are theoretical or analytical interpretations developed by researchers to explain how politeness operates as a social and linguistic phenomenon. Grainger emphasized that effective analysis should bridge the gap between these two levels by acknowledging how politeness is both experienced by participants and conceptualized by scholars.

In contrast to earlier models that treated politeness as a fixed and universally applicable system, third-wave perspectives view it as a dynamic, evaluative, and culturally situated practice. By emphasizing interpretation, interaction, and context, this approach captures the complexity of how (im)politeness is constructed and understood in real-life communication.

Despite the criticisms raised by second- and third-waves in politeness research, Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory remains the primary analytical framework for this study due to its enduring conceptual clarity, systematic structure, and foundational role in the field. While later scholars have challenged its assumptions, such as its claims to universality, its model continues to offer a coherent and accessible foundation for analyzing how face-threatening acts are managed in interaction. The theory's core concepts, particularly the distinction between positive and negative face and the taxonomy of politeness strategies, remain analytically useful for identifying and interpreting regularities in linguistic behavior.

Watts (2003) acknowledges the theory's foundational status in politeness research, despite offering critical refinements. Locher and Watts (2005) also positioned the model as a necessary reference point in the development of relational approaches. Similarly, Haugh (2007), highlighted its continued relevance in understanding cross-cultural aspects of politeness. Rather than adopting Brown and Levinson's model uncritically, this research draws on it as a heuristic tool, while remaining mindful of its limitations. This enables the study to engage with politeness as both a structured system and a socially situated practice, using Brown and Levinson's framework as a grounded starting point for exploring the linguistic realization of politeness in specific interactional contexts.

1.2 Section Two: Theoretical Foundation of Humor

1.2.1 Definition of Humor.

The term "humor" entered lexicological studies relatively late in its semantic development. Unlike its modern meaning, it is originally derived from Latin, it signified "fluid" or "moisture." This meaning was foundational to Hippocrates' medical theory, which associated human health and temperament with four bodily fluids: blood, lymph, yellow bile, and black bile. For centuries, the word "humor" was thus used to describe aspects of a person's disposition or character, reflecting their balance of these internal fluids (Bhikha & Glynn, 2017, p. 2).

The semantic shift towards the current understanding of the term humor represents an important conceptual transformation. According to Meriam-Webster (n,d), humor now signifies the cognitive ability to recognize, enjoy, or convey things that are ridiculous or the humorous or bizarre incongruous, the capacity to be humorous or to find enjoyment in humorous situations. Similarly, the Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines humor as the attribute of something that evokes entertainment or laughter, along with the ability to recognize and appreciate such comedic elements.

From the viewpoint of pragmatics, humor functions as a powerful mode of communication that operates through paradox and emotional engagement to generate laughter and enjoyment (Lena Strabburger, 2022, p. 37). However, its effects are double-edged; while it can foster joy and interpersonal connection, it can also coincidentally reinforce prejudice by sidestepping critical thought, making its ethical use essential (Claire Horsk, 2024, p. 11). Within a communicative framework, humor is a complex phenomenon with multiple purposes in social interactions, such as helping to establish rapport and reduce tension, or as an expression of power or subversion of social norms (Norrick, 1993, p. 12).

Along with the scholar's attempts to define humor and humorous texts, several theories treating humor as a concept and a phenomenon have also been suggested. The next area of interest will go into some of the most common humor theories and provide an insight into how these theories address humor. It must be mentioned that it is impractical to include the most important theories of humor in this part. Therefore, the most important ones, including those which are related to this research, will be briefly examined.

1.2.2 Theories of Humor

Theories of humor encompass various frameworks that explain why humor resonates with individuals and how it functions in social contexts. Attardo (p. 59) notes that while countless humor theories exist, evidenced by numerous academic and popular discourses; many revise established ideas with new terminology or combinations. Scholars categorize these theories into three main frameworks to simplify analysis:

1.2.2.1 Theories of Superiority

Humor, as outlined by this well-regarded and widely acknowledged perspective, is viewed as an expression of an individual's sense of superiority over others. This theory involves components of superiority, disparagement, hostility, and degradation. Scholars who

support this viewpoint use different terms, including hostility theories, superiority theories, and disparagement theories, to describe their distinct formulations (Morreall, 1987, p. 5).

Thomas Hobbes, a contemporary pioneer in humor studies, contributed to the development of the superiority theory of humor, which has its roots in ancient philosophical ideas, particularly in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Throughout Plato's Republic, humor is portrayed as a kind of hate speech aimed at the weak. On the other hand, Aristotle defined comedy as a depiction of people who are less virtuous than the typical person in his Poetics (Martin & Ford, 2018, p. 42). This historical background highlights how deeply established the idea of superiority is in Western intellectual heritage.

Thomas Hobbes articulated the fundamental idea of the superiority theory, asserting that "the passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly" (Hobbes, 1650/1987, p. 20). According to this viewpoint, laughing is a reaction to realizing one's superior standing or position in relation to other people or one's former self.

The modern evolution of superiority theory is exemplified in the work of Charles Gruner, who defined humor as "playful hostility," differentiating it from "genuine" violence that includes physical harm or abuse. Reframed as the Superiority Theory of Humor, Gruner (1997, as cited in Martin & Ford, 2018, p. 46) presents a three-part thesis:

a. Every humorous event includes a winner and a loser.
b. Incongruity is always present in a humorous event.
c. Humor necessitates a surprise factor.

Despite its historical importance, the superiority theory has faced significant criticism. The main problem is that people often laugh in various situations without any feelings of superiority over others. As Schwarz (2010) explains, Hobbes' theory of humor compares

elements of influence, domination, and superiority, as he claims that “as a political philosopher, [he] views humor as a method of demonstrating authority in the ‘social sphere’” (p. 48). However, these political and social perspectives make his theory too limited to explain all types of humor.

Since the superiority theory cannot explain all types of humor, researchers have developed other theoretical frameworks. Incongruity theories, which focus on the cognitive processing of unexpected or surprising jokes, and relief theories, which highlight the release of tension or nervous energy, have emerged to serve as supportive theories (Attardo, 2014, p. 66). Modern humor researchers claim that multiple theories may be necessary to fully understand the different types of humor or various aspects of the same humorous event. For instance, Warren and McGraw (2016) propose that instead of viewing these theories as competing, we should see them as highlighting different sides of humor. They propose that “humor occurs when something that violates our expectations, understanding, or sense of normalcy is simultaneously seen as benign or acceptable” (p. 411), therefore integrating aspects of both incongruity and superiority perspectives.

1.2.2.2 Theories of Incongruity

In modern philosophical discourse, the incongruity theory is one of the most widely accepted explanations for humor. From this standpoint, humor emerges when we recognize a contradiction between our conceptual understanding of the universe and a particular experience that deviates from this understanding (Straus, 2014). The fundamental premise of the incongruity hypothesis is that we laugh when we encounter anything that deviates from our typical thought processes and preconceived notions of how things ought to be (Morreall, 2011).

The core premise of Incongruity Theory posits that individuals generally perceive the universe as ordered in their daily lives; they believe that events adhere to logical patterns,

actions yield predictable outcomes, and things behave consistently. When we encounter something unexpected that deviates from our usual anticipations, humor is the result. As noted by Straus (2014), “people feel amused when they have an experience that violates the normal order of things according to their subjective understanding of what the normal order of things is" (p. 6). The roots of incongruity theory in philosophy can be traced back to Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer. In his “Critique of the Power of Judgment” (1790), Kant suggested that laughter occurs when “a strained expectation is suddenly transformed into nothing” (§53 5:333). Although Kant did not specifically use the term “incongruity,” his work highlights the mismatch between expectations and outcomes as a fundamental source of entertainment. Building on this idea, Schopenhauer asserts that humor emerged from “the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation” (Straus, 2014, p. 36). Schopenhauer’s idea changed the way people think about humor. He looked more closely at the gap between what we think we know about the world and what actually happens, rather than just focusing on unexpected or surprising results.

It is important to note that incongruity theory is subject-dependent, meaning what one person finds funny may not be funny to someone else. Cultural backgrounds, education levels, and personal experiences all shape our understanding of what shapes the normal order of things (Straus, 2014, p. 7). That’s why humor can be different from one culture to another, and even between individuals within the same cultural context.

For something unexpected to be humorous, some additional conditions must be met. The subject must have a suitable emotional state, be in an appropriate mood, and temporal distance from the incongruity (Straus, 2014). As Mark Twain remarked, “comedy is tragedy plus time” (Straus, 2014, p. 24). This explains why something that feels painful or upsetting

at first might make us laugh later on, once enough time has gone by and the emotions have settled.

Moreover, the Incongruity Theory helps to explain why people find certain types of jokes funnier than others, especially those that seem normal at first but take an unexpected turn. Modern comedy often applies this mechanism by presenting situations that seem normal until a punch line reveals a fundamental incongruity, triggering laughter (Straus, 2014). This shows that we are most amused by incongruities that don't immediately present themselves as incongruous.

Even though it gives a rich explanation about humor, the Incongruity Theory has limitations. Not all incongruities are humorous, and the theory struggles to explain when or why an incongruity will actually be humorous. As Martin (1987) claimed that we find many incongruities pleasing but not amusing, such as those presented in surrealist art. Nevertheless, the Incongruity Theory remains a useful framework for understanding humor. It shows how our minds interact with breaking the usual patterns of how we expect the world to function.

1.2.2.3 Theory of Relief

The Relief theories explain humor through the idea of tension and its release. Instead of focusing on what makes something funny in terms of content or structure, these theories look at the emotional and physical processes that lead to laughter. Two of the most influential figures in this area are Herbert Spencer and Sigmund Freud, who each proposed different versions of the theory. The strong version suggests that almost all laughter comes from releasing built-up energy, while the weaker version says laughter often helps release stress or effort.

Herbert Spencer introduced his idea in The Physiology of Laughter (1860), where he described how mental excitement or stimulation creates energy that needs to be released. According to him, this built-up nervous energy naturally finds an outlet through physical

motion, like laughter. He argued that laughter isn't just a response to humor, but a physical way of letting go of "cognitive agitation." Importantly, Spencer didn't try to compete with the Incongruity Theory; instead, he aimed to explain why an incongruous or surprising situation results in the specific reaction of laughter. For him, laughter is simply one way for the body to get rid of extra nervous energy.

Sigmund Freud later built on these ideas in his work Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious. He suggested that laughter helps us relieve psychological stress. Freud identified three main triggers for laughter: jokes, comic situations, and humorous situations. All three, he claimed, involve the release of "psychic energy," the mental effort we usually spend keeping certain thoughts or feelings, especially those about taboo topics like sex or death, under control (Smuts, 2006). When we laugh at these topics, it's not just because we find them funny, but because we're finally letting ourselves acknowledge and enjoy them in a socially acceptable way. Freud saw humor as a tool that allows people to momentarily escape the pressure of social rules and norms (Raskin, 1985, pp. 38-39).

Some scholars, like Morreall (1983), believe that relief theory doesn't need to compete with other humor theories, such as the incongruity or superiority theories, but instead offers a different perspective. Morreall explains that it simply focuses on another part of the humor experience: the emotional and psychological release that comes with laughter (p. 21).

However, release theories do have their limitations. Not all humor involves tension or stress beforehand. For example, some jokes or funny situations don't seem to build up any pressure that needs to be released. And not all humor deals with taboo topics or emotions that need to be suppressed. This means that while relief theories help explain why we laugh, they don't fully explain what makes something humorous in the first place.

1.2.3 Linguistics theories of humor

Raskin's (1985) Semantic Mechanisms of Humor marked a significant shift in the linguistics of humor, placing pragmatics and semantics at the core of humor research. His work brought both areas into the spotlight (Attardo & Raskin, 2017). Additionally, Morreall (1997) argues that the contradiction between what the audience expects and what they get is a key element of incongruity theory, which plays a major role in linguistic approaches to humor. While the theory doesn't fully account for other important factors, such as culture-specific context, as pointed out by Martin (2007) and Olin (2016), it is still widely used by humor scholars. As a result, both the Semantic Script Theory of Humor and the General Theory of Verbal Humor grew directly out of the foundation laid by incongruity theory.

1.2.3.1 The Semantic Script Theory of Humor

In his influential work, Semantic Mechanisms of Humor (1985), Raskin provided a comprehensive account of the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH). His theory is built on two main components, suggesting that any humorous text can be interpreted in two opposing ways. These two ideas, called "overlapping" and "opposing," are key to how humor works in this theory. "Overlapping" simply means that a single joke or text can be understood in two different ways at the same time. "Opposing," on the other hand, means that these two meanings clash with each other or go in completely different directions (Raskin, 1985, p. 99).

Raskin also points out the importance of the "script," which he sees as the hidden meaning or framework behind a joke. He explains a script as "a large chunk of semantic information surrounding the word or evoked by it" (Raskin, 1985, p. 81), see also Attardo (1994). In simple terms, it's the background knowledge or mental image that comes to mind when we hear certain words. Attardo expands on this idea, describing a script as a mental structure that the speaker has internalised, essentially, knowledge about how things typically happen (Attardo, 1994, p. 199). According to him, "overlapping" occurs whenever parts of a

text can be understood in more than one way (Attardo, 1994, p. 203), which is a key feature in the SSTH.

In short, Attardo explains Raskin's theory as follows: if a text matches two scripts, either completely or partially, and these scripts are in opposition, then, and only then, will the text be considered humorous under the SSTH (Attardo, 1994, p. 205). Humor, in this sense, emerges when the punch line causes the listener to shift suddenly from one script to the other. Although Raskin tried to create a model that stood apart from the traditional humor theories, he couldn't fully detach it. Attardo (1997, p. 396) even suggests that the SSTH is basically a version of the Incongruity Theory, because the clash between the two scripts shows a kind of mismatch or contradiction. One common critique of this theory is that it puts too much focus on jokes, while ignoring other forms of humor that don't follow the same pattern.

1.2.3.2 The General Theory of Verbal Humor

The general theory of verbal humor (GTVH) was invented by Attardo and Raskin in 1991 and thus can be defined as a re-examination of Raskin's SSTH. The GTVH may be thought of as a refined and broadened version of Raskin's SSTH. Moreover, the GTVH focuses on verbal humor, as it characterizes a joke as a combination of six different types of Knowledge Resources (KRs). Furthermore, the latter was expanded by the addition of five more knowledge resources to support the Script Opposition (SO) provided in Raskin's SSTH. The following is a list of the six KRs provided by Attardo and Raskin (1991, p. 312).

a. **Script Opposition (SO).** The Script Opposition dimension introduced in Raskin's SSTH is the emphasis of this Knowledge Resource. It refers to a conflict between two scripts or concepts that are considered incompatible, but overlap in some way, creating a sense of discrepancy or contradiction in the humorous discourse (Attardo & Raskin, 1991).

b. **Logical Mechanism (LM).** This option describes how the two scripts are brought together and addresses the resolution of the incongruity within the joke. Fallacious logic, garden-path thinking, and faulty analogy are a few examples (Mulyadi et al., 2021, p. 5).

c. **Situation (SI).** This information resource covers the background, people, things, and activities that is discussed in the joke. Basically, any joke must be about something. (Attardo 2002, p. 179).

d. **Target (TA).** The target of the joke refers to a person, a group, a behavior, or even an ideological target. In simple words, who or what is mocked or criticised. The target basically relates to the punchline. Although a limited amount of jokes do not even have obvious targets, Attardo & Raskin (1991, p. 302) state that this KR is optional.

e. **Narrative Strategy (NS).** This refers to the type or format that is used to transmit the joke, such as simple narrative, dialogue, riddle, or question and answer format (Mulyadi et al., 2021, p. 6).

f. **Language (LA).** According to Attardo (2002, pp. 176-177), LA encompasses all required elements for a text's verbalization. It handles both the proper framing of the text and the arrangement of its functional components. Thus, language represents the joke's essence, which is expressed within linguistic limitations (Krikmann, 2006, p. 37). In conclusion, LA relates to the textual and linguistic features employed in humorous narratives.

A hierarchical structure of six knowledge resources (Script Opposition, Logical Mechanism, Situation, Target, Narrative Strategies, and Language) is presented by the GTVH, with each level constraining lower levels (Attardo & Raskin, 1991). This structure explains the similarity of jokes: jokes that share higher-level resources (e.g., SO) are seen as

more similar than jokes that share only concrete linguistic features (Attardo, 2017). The predictive validity of this hierarchy is confirmed by empirical studies (Ruch et al.)

The GTVH goes far beyond Raskin's SSTH by adding pragmatic, textual, and social dimensions (Attardo, 2017). This allows for the analysis of a variety of humor forms, including stand-up routines, puns, and even visual humor like comics (Attardo, 1994, 1998). Its multifaceted approach is especially useful for cross-cultural studies, as it separates humor elements that are universal from those that are culture-specific (Attardo, 2017).

While critics note challenges in consistently applying some fuzzy-boundaried resources (Hempelmann & Attardo, 2009), the GTVH remains linguistics' most comprehensive humor model. Recent integrations with cognitive linguistics and computational approaches (Mulyadi et al., 2021) demonstrate its evolving relevance as both an analytical tool and a theoretical framework for contemporary humor research.

1.2.3.3 Types of Humor

Humor manifests in countless forms, each serving distinct social or communicative purposes. Below are some well-known types of humor:

- **Canned Jokes**

Canned jokes are a conventionalized type of verbal humor; usually, the canned jokes consist of two parts: a setup or (build-up) and a punchline. They are often shared orally or published in collections and are regarded as micro-narratives focused on delivering the punchline for comedic effect (Sherzer, 1985; Attardo, 1994).

- **Wordplay/Puns**

One popular technique for telling jokes is wordplay. Wordplay refers to any hilarious expression where the comedy is generated from linguistic ambiguities, sounds, or connotations (e.g., puns). This includes when a speaker purposefully uses ambiguity in their

speech or when a listener picks up on it and plays with it for humorous effect (Wilson, 2021, pp. 46-48).

- **Irony & Sarcasm**

Martin & Ford (2018, p. 30) pointed that when a speaker says something like, "What a wonderful day!" in the face of chilly and rainy weather, the literal meaning is a polar opposite of the intended meaning. Sarcasm and irony are often used interchangeably. Irony, according to Grice (1975), is a particular conversational implicature brought on by a clear violation of the first maxim of "quality" principle.

- **Satire**

The term "satire" originates from the Latin term "Satura", which refers to "full plate, or plate full of fruits". However, satire in the humor research field is defined as the aggressive humor that exposes contradictions of individuals or social institutions through ridicule (Ruiz et al., 2013, p. 30). Therefore, the goal of satire is to provoke not simply amusement but laughing that is intended to lead to reform. It has a target that the satirist seeks to ridicule, including pretension, dishonesty, untruth, and vanity.

- **Parody**

Parody is a humorous imitation of a specific style, work, or person. It is the use of exaggeration or distortion to show comic effects. It uses satirical or ironic imitation to comment on or mock its subject. There are three types of parody identified by Nil Kuorkut: (1) parodies of text and personal style, which target specific works, phrases, or an author's style; (2) genre parodies, which concentrate on the literary genre's conventions and tropes; and (3) discourse parodies, which mimic or criticize the religious, societal, ideological, or philosophical language of a specific individuals, groups, or even activities (Korkut, 2009, pp. 15-17)

- **Dark Humor**

Dark humor, also known as morbid humor or gallows humor, humorously addresses taboo or tragic topics (like death, suffering, or racism). It is considered transgressive, as it crosses social and moral boundaries, it frequently trivializes serious topics for comedic effects (Freud, 1928; Ford et al., 2017)

- **self-Deprecating Humor**

It is considered the most distinctive pragmatic varieties of humor that arise whenever the individual directs a criticism or uncomplimentary remark towards himself. It denotes amusing remarks made about oneself as the target of the joke. This might be done to demonstrate humility, reassure the listener, or introduce and engender empathy in the listener. Furthermore, this kind of comedy exposes the confidence and preset standards for self-presentation that support self-deprecating conduct. As a result of utilizing the method of self-deprecation, the speaker exhibits a good self-image (Norrick, 1993). This type of humor is said to be a source of self-awareness since it shows that the speaker is willing to joke about one's own flaws or faults.

- **Spoonerisms**

Another type of humor is called "spoonerism," or "speech errors," in which one or two letters or sounds are accidentally or intentionally switched around inside a single word or between two syllables. "A verbal error in which a speaker accidentally transposes the initial sounds or letters of two or more words, often to humorous effect," is what Oxford Dictionaries defines as "spoonerism." According to Vousden et al. (2000), there are three primary categories of spoonerisms:

- Anticipation errors, as in 'bake my bike,' a section emerges too soon (take my bike).
- Perseveration errors, as in 'beef noodle,' a section appears later than initially anticipated (beef needle).

- Sound exchanges, happen when two phonemes are flipped, as in ‘teep a cape’ (keep a tape).

- **Physical/Slapstick**

It is the kind of humor involving exaggerated physical actions, such as pratfalls, collisions, and other forms of physical accidents (both accidental and intentional). And the most common name of the game in this ongoing genre is chaotic mishaps (Zoe Dumas, 2024).

- **Banter**

A brief tease can turn to a prolonged exchange of crosstalk, labelled as banter if both parties are open to engaging in a light-hearted conversation. Banter, as defined by Norrick (1993, p. 29), is “Rapid exchange of humorous lines orientated towards a common theme, though aimed primarily at mutual entertainment rather than topical talk.” One of the most crucial aspects of banter is the rapid delivery of subsequent retorts, which turns the exchange into a verbal ping-pong match between two or more people (Chiaro, 1992).

- **Register**

Register clash manifests itself in two different ways: lowering, often referred to as bathos, which involves using phrases from a lower register in formal writing, and upgrading, which involves using components from a higher register in informal speech. This activity usually depends on the thoughts being conveyed as well as the style, which should only be stated (in) formally if the humor is purposeful (Attardo 1994, 2001).

- **Teasing**

Different researchers have characterized teasing in various ways. While some of those interpretations highlight that teasing is a happy medium between violence and tenderness (Brenman, 1952), others assert that teasing might involve aggressiveness (Alberts, 1992).

It has been said that the animosity in teasing is "ostensible," as the goal of the teaser is to dramatise or question someone's actions in a positive way rather than to be offensive (Dynel 2009, p. 1293).

- **Memetic Humor**

According to Lankshear and Knobel (2019), a meme, also referred to as a "internet meme," is a phrase used to describe the rapid adoption and spread of a "specific idea presented as a written text, image, language 'move,' or some other piece of cultural 'stuff' found online." Another definition of an "online meme" is a term for a catchphrase or concept that rapidly spreads from one user to another online. It is possible to classify a term, image, music, or video as an online meme (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

1.2.4 The Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ)

Martin et al. (2003) introduced four humor styles as everyday functions of humor related to psycho-social well-being, which were derived from a literature review on humor and well-being. The four dimensions of the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) evaluate various applications or purposes of humor in daily life. While two of these characteristics are hypothesized to be less benign and maybe harmful to well-being, the other two are considered beneficial to psychological well-being. The HSQ is not intended to be a comprehensive assessment of all the previously mentioned aspects of sense of humor; rather, it concentrates on the intrapsychic and interpersonal purposes that humor serves in people's daily lives, particularly those most relevant to psychosocial well-being (Martin et al, 2003, p. 50)

1.2.4.1 Affiliative Humor

It is used to strengthen social bonds and create a sense of solidarity among participants (Martin, 2007, p. 52). According to Lefcourt (2001), individuals who score high on this dimension often use humor, jokes, and spontaneous clever banter to make others

laugh, build relationships, and ease interpersonal tensions. They also frequently engage in self-deprecating humor to help others feel more comfortable, making jokes about themselves and not taking themselves too seriously, while still maintaining a sense of self-acceptance (Vaillant, 1977). This form of humor is primarily tolerant and non-hostile; it affirms both the self and others and is believed to enhance interpersonal attraction and cohesion. It is expected that this type of humor is positively associated with extraversion, happiness, intimacy, self-esteem, relationship satisfaction, and a general tendency toward positive emotions and moods.

1.2.4.2 Aggressive Humor

This type of humor is used to criticize, mock, or assert dominance at the expense of others (Kotthoff, 2006, p. 20). Forms such as sarcasm, teasing, mockery, derision, "put-downs," or disparaging humor, they all fall under the category of aggressive humor (Zillman, 1983). It also includes using humor as a means of control, where individuals subtly threaten to make fun of others (Janes & Olson, 2000). Aggressive humor typically reflects a tendency to express humor without regard for its impact on others, for example, in the case of sexist or racist jokes. It also encompasses compulsive humor, where individuals struggle to resist the urge to make amusing remarks, even if those comments may offend or alienate others.

1.2.4.3 Self-Enhancing Humor

Used to cope with stress or maintain a positive self-image, often through witty remarks or playful self-reflection (Martin, 2007, p. 54). This dimension includes a generally humorous attitude towards life, an aptitude to find humor in life's incongruities, and the ability to remain humorous even when faced with stress or hardship (Kuiper, Martin, & Olinger, 1993). This includes perspective-taking humor (Lefcourt et al., 1995), the use of humor as a coping mechanism or emotion regulation (Dixon, 1980; Martin, Kuiper, Olinger, & Dance, 1993), and the idea of coping humor (Martin, 1996). In the strictest sense, it is most

in line with the Freudian definition of humor, which holds that it is a healthy defence mechanism that enables one to avoid unpleasant feelings while keeping a realistic outlook on a potentially unpleasant situation (Freud, 1928).

1.2.4.4 Self-Defeating Humor

Used to gain approval or deflect criticism by making oneself the target of jokes (Hay, 2000, p. 712). This dimension includes excessively self-deprecating humor, attempts to make others laugh by making jokes at one's own expense to gain favor or approval, letting oneself be the "butt" of other people's jokes, and joining in on others' laughter when they are made fun of or disparaged. It is also hypothesized that this dimension includes the use of humor as defensive denial, or the propensity to act humorously to conceal one's underlying negative emotions or to avoid constructively handling problems (Kubie, 1971). Even though people who score highly on this humor dimension might be viewed as humorous or witty (e.g., "class clowns"), their use of humor is often accompanied by emotional neediness, avoidance, and low self-esteem.

1.2.5 The Intersection of Humor and Politeness

Humor is a vital and complex aspect of interpersonal communication, serving as both a social facilitator and a strategic tool. It's especially significant within politeness frameworks, where it helps manage "face" and relieve interpersonal tension, particularly evident in informal interactions.

1.2.6 Humor as a Politeness Strategy

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), humor plays a key role in various politeness strategies, such as Joke which is the 8th positive politeness sub-strategy that builds rapport, emphasizes shared understanding, and reduces social distance. This is highly effective in informal settings where participants share knowledge and seek to foster solidarity. Humor can also be used as a Bald-off-Record strategy (Strategy 10) through irony or banter,

allowing speakers to address sensitive topics indirectly, thereby protecting both positive and negative face. Affiliative humor (Martin 2003) which is a type of humor used to promote social bonds, reduce tension, and create a sense of connection or inclusion among individuals, characterized by lighthearted jokes and playful banter, closely aligns with these strategies, particularly Joke (Strategy 8) by fostering in-group identity and solidarity. It also subtly contributes to Bald-off-Record (Strategy 10) through its indirect and often implied nature, allowing for delicate topic navigation. Furthermore, self-enhancing humor, which is about reframing challenges humorously, supports negative politeness by maintaining self-esteem and autonomy. Both forms are frequently employed in informal contexts to maintain smooth social exchanges.

While humor is a powerful tool for face management, easing tension, building solidarity, and softening the impact of FTAs by making them seem less severe, it also carries the significant potential to attack face. The impoliteness framework highlights how sarcasm, teasing, or ridicule can be used aggressively, making humor itself an FTA. In informal settings, seemingly harmless teasing can quickly escalate into face-threatening acts if misinterpreted or if it breaches unstated social norms. Misaligned or misinterpreted humor can harm rather than protect face, especially if it targets vulnerabilities. Therefore, its success is not guaranteed and requires mutual interpretation, cultural, and linguistic awareness to avoid unintended offense or exclusion, particularly in diverse settings like EFL outside classroom contexts and within the nuanced dynamics of informal group interactions.

Although traditionally viewed as a politeness tool, later theories emphasize that humor's interpretation and effectiveness are highly context-dependent and interactionally negotiated. Its social meaning is co-constructed between speakers and hearers. This means that humor is inherently ambivalent: it can connect or divide, affirm or undermine. In

informal interactions, where social norms might be more fluid, the potential for both positive connection and negative misinterpretation is pronounced.

So, this study focuses exclusively on how humor functions as a politeness tool, rather than exploring its potential to threaten face or contribute to impoliteness.

1.2.7 Empirical Studies: Humor and Politeness (1998 onwards)

The summaries below highlight 8 empirical studies examining the relationship between humor and politeness, with a primary focus on research published since 1998. Each summary includes the study's title, author(s), publication year, and a brief overview of its methodology, findings, and relevance to the intersection of humor and politeness strategies in interaction.

Study 1: "You're Out of Your Mind!": Humor as a Face-Saving Strategy During Neuropsychological Examinations

This sociolinguistic study by Saunders (1998, pp. 357-372), examines humor as a face-saving strategy during neuropsychological examinations. Drawing on transcribed audiotapes of interactions between clinicians and dementia patients, the study found that patients frequently initiated humor as a means of asserting control and managing face in a context marked by vulnerability and potential threat to self-image. Saunders demonstrates how humor operates as a defensive mechanism in high-stakes interactions, allowing individuals to protect their social image during face-threatening acts such as criticism, disagreement, or intrusive requests. By softening the impact of these moments, humor helps maintain interpersonal harmony, ease tension, and mitigate potential offense.

Study 2: Politeness, Power and Provocation: How Humor Functions in the Workplace

This empirical study by Janet Holmes (2000, pp. 159-185), investigates the multifaceted functions of verbal humor in workplace interactions across four New Zealand government departments. Drawing on recorded conversational data, Holmes analyzes how humor interacts with politeness, power dynamics, and provocation. The study reveals that humor can foster positive affect and collegiality, functioning in line with politeness theory by softening hierarchical boundaries and mitigating power imbalances. At the same time, it uncovers the "dark side" of politeness, where humor serves more adversarial purposes, such as asserting dominance, expressing competition, or provoking confrontation. Holmes demonstrates that while superiors may use humor to reinforce authority, subordinates can employ it strategically to resist or challenge institutional power structures.

Study 3: Humor, Face and Im/Politeness in Getting Acquainted

This study by Michael Haugh (2011, pp. 81-108), explores how humor functions in early-stage interactions between unacquainted Australian English speakers. Drawing on 18 recorded conversations, the study reveals that humor, particularly teasing and self-deprecatory remarks, plays a crucial role in building rapport and managing face needs. Haugh emphasizes that evaluations of humor as polite or impolite are context-dependent, shaped by how interlocutors interpret each other's intentions and the evolving dynamics of the conversation. What one speaker perceives as light-hearted or affiliative may be seen by another as inappropriate or intrusive, depending on the level of rapport and mutual alignment. Humor was typically viewed as polite when it helped defuse tension, ease disagreement, or display sensitivity to the other's face. However, if mistimed or poorly received, the same strategies could be interpreted as impolite. The study underscores that humor's social value is not fixed but negotiated moment by moment within the interaction.

Study 4: Pragmatics, Humor Studies, and the Study of Interaction

This study by Nancy D. Bell (2018, pp. 291–309), reviews empirical research at the intersection of pragmatics, humor, and interaction, emphasizing how humor functions as a key politeness strategy. Bell highlights the strategic use of humor to navigate face-threatening acts by embedding critique, disagreement, or sensitive topics within humorous frames, thereby mitigating directness and protecting face. The chapter shows how humor facilitates both positive politeness, through fostering solidarity, rapport, and shared identity, and negative politeness, by softening impositions and easing conversational tension. Bell also underscores the importance of context and cultural norms in interpreting humorous acts, noting that what is seen as affiliative in one setting may be inappropriate in another. Through this synthesis, Bell positions humor not as peripheral but as central to politeness, contributing significantly to identity construction and the negotiation of social relationships in interaction.

Study 5: A Pragmatic Analysis of Politeness Strategies Applied in the Use of Humorous Phatic Utterances

This study by Dedi Febrianto (2019), employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the relationship between politeness strategies, specifically solidarity and deference, and humorous phatic utterances in casual dialogue. Analyzing selected scenes from four episodes of the American sitcom Friends (Season 6, Episodes 21–24), Febrianto identified 37 humorous phatic utterances, defined as expressions used not to convey information but to initiate, maintain, or smoothen social interaction. These utterances, delivered through jokes, teasing, and playful banter, served a phatic function while simultaneously fostering rapport, easing tension, and sustaining interpersonal engagement.

The study highlights how humor works hand-in-hand with politeness, particularly through solidarity strategies like claiming common ground, using in-group identity markers,

expressing empathy, and showing cooperation. Deference strategies were also evident, with humor used to soften potential face-threatening acts and preserve interpersonal harmony. The analysis reveals that characters in Friends strategically employed humor to build closeness and manage relational dynamics, making humorous phatic exchanges key tools for social bonding and face management. Ultimately, the study illustrates that humor in entertainment mirrors real-world social interaction, functioning not only as a source of amusement but as a pragmatic device for navigating complex interpersonal relationships.

Study 6: Humorous Mockery: How to Amuse and Be Polite at the Same Time

This study by Lin He, Rong Chen, and Ming Dong (2023, pp. 31-40) examines humorous mockery in Chinese stand-up comedy, with a focus on the popular show Rock and Roast. The researchers explore how comedians navigate the tension between mockery and politeness, finding that performers typically target “face 2”, public figures or shared social identities, rather than “face 1,” the private self of individuals. This selective targeting, along with the use of politeness strategies, allows comedians to frame mockery in ways that are socially acceptable and contextually appropriate, even in a roast-heavy comedic environment.

The study offers valuable insight into how potentially offensive humor can be recontextualized as affiliative rather than antagonistic. It shows that politeness strategies, such as adopting a playful tone, referencing shared experiences, and signaling in-group membership, enable comedians to mitigate the potential threat of mockery. These strategies help transform aggression into amusement, reinforcing solidarity and expressing closeness. In some cases, mockery is even interpreted as an indirect form of praise or bonding. The findings underscore the role of relational alignment and mutual understanding in determining whether humor is perceived as face-threatening or face-enhancing. Ultimately, this study demonstrates how comedians skillfully balance the goals of entertaining their audience and preserving positive social relationships through strategic use of politeness.

Study 7: Face-Saving Acts as Politeness Goal and Their Pragmatic Imports in Chimamanda Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun

This study by Ikoro, Onyinyechi Stella (2024, pp. 8-21) applies Brown and Levinson's politeness theory to selected dialogues in Half of a Yellow Sun, using a qualitative approach to examine how characters employ humor to navigate face-threatening interactions. It identifies "joke/play techniques" as a form of face-saving strategy that eases tension and maintains interpersonal harmony within the narrative. By highlighting humor as an intentional politeness strategy in literary dialogue, this study illustrates how fictional texts reflect realistic communicative practices. It demonstrates that authors deliberately embed humor to portray culturally resonant ways of managing social relationships, emphasizing the role of humor in reinforcing social cohesion and mitigating conflict in both literature and everyday interaction.

Study 8: Responses to Conversational Humour: An Analytical Framework

This study by Amir Sheikhan (2024, pp. 57-73) develops a typology of five response types to conversational humor, such as dis-attending, minimal responses, and post-expansion, based on data from recorded intercultural interactions. While the primary focus is on how humor is received rather than how it is produced, the study offers valuable insights into the relational and politeness implications of humor in conversation. It emphasizes that the success of humor as a politeness strategy is not solely determined by the speaker's intent or delivery, but by how it is interpreted and responded to by the hearer. This shift in focus highlights the interactive nature of humor and underscores that its effectiveness in managing face and maintaining rapport hinges on mutual alignment and recognition within the exchange.

Conclusion

In sum, the interplay between humor and politeness in informal interactions reveals how individuals skillfully manage face, ease social tension, and strengthen interpersonal bonds. Far from being merely entertaining, humor functions as a strategic and context-sensitive tool that reflects a deeper understanding of social harmony and communicative subtlety.

Chapter Two: Methodology, Data Analysis, and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter deals with the methodological framework adopted for the present study, which investigates the use of humor as a politeness strategy in informal interactions among Master One EFL learners at Laarbi Tebessi University. The chapter provides a detailed account of the research approach, design, sampling methods, participants' profile, data collection tools and procedures, data analysis methods, ethical considerations, and study limitations. The research recorded students's casual group discussions in relaxed informal settings. All conversations were transcribed in detail, noting important features like pauses, interruptions, and laughter. These were later analyzed to identify patterns of humorous and polite communication. Strict ethical rules were followed, including getting permission from all participants and keeping their identities secret.

2.1 Section One: Methodology

2.1.1 Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, as it seeks to explore and interpret participants' naturally occurring language use in informal settings. The qualitative paradigm is appropriate for uncovering the complex, context-dependent nature of conversational phenomena such as humor and politeness. According to Dörnyei (2007, p.37), qualitative research is suitable for examining the meanings that individuals or groups assign to social or human problems, particularly when the focus is on how language is used in real-life contexts rather than on quantifiable variables.

Given that the present study focuses on spontaneous language behavior rather than pre-determined responses, a qualitative approach allows for greater depth and flexibility. Furthermore, this approach is consistent with Conversation Analysis's focus on the structure and organization of everyday talk as a socially organized and structured activity (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). Rather than testing hypotheses or measuring variables, CA analyzes how participants accomplish actions through language in real time. Therefore, a qualitative approach is both theoretically and practically suited to the objectives of this study.

Humor and politeness, as communicative strategies, are deeply embedded in social interaction and cannot be fully understood through quantification alone. As Silverman (2013) argued, qualitative research enables the researcher to focus on the meanings and functions of spoken interaction within specific contexts, making it particularly appropriate for discourse-level analysis.

In the context of this study, the focus is on how EFL learners employ humor as a politeness strategy in informal peer interactions. These phenomena often manifest subtly, through laughter, joking sequences, hedging, or indirectness, and are shaped by contextual

cues and participant relationships. A qualitative lens allows the researcher to observe and interpret these patterns as they naturally occur.

Moreover, this rationale is consistent with the principles of CA. CA emphasizes inductive analysis, where meaning is derived from detailed attention to how utterances are organized sequentially and socially (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974).

By embracing a qualitative paradigm, the present study captures the richness and variability of authentic language use, offering insights into how humor and politeness function dynamically in spoken English among Algerian EFL students.

2.1.2 Research Design

The research design of this study employs a conversation analytic case study approach to explore how humor functions as a politeness strategy within naturally occurring conversations among EFL learners. According to Sidnell and Stivers (2013), the conversation analytic case study approach allows researchers to "examine the sequential organization of talk and how participants construct social realities through their interactions" (p. 2). This approach, enables a detailed examination of interactional practices as they unfold naturally in focus group settings (Ilomäki & Ruusuvuori, 2022, p. 8). This design facilitates close, qualitative examination of recorded talk and allows for the in-depth exploration of patterns such as turn-taking, laughter, and speech mitigation, which are central to the study's aims.

The study involves the collection of audio data recordings from informal focus group conversations conducted with Master One English students at Laarbi Tebessi University. Each group participated in a 40-minute session, followed by a joint one-hour session involving both groups. This design was selected to allow participants maximum freedom over topic selection and conversational flow.

The goal was to simulate naturalistic interaction as closely as possible (Sidnell, 2010). Overall, this research design provides a flexible yet systematic approach to capturing and

analyzing informal conversational behavior in a manner consistent with both qualitative research and CA methodology.

The Conversation Analysis (CA) is a core research method to investigate how humor functions as a politeness strategy in informal conversations among EFL learners. CA is a qualitative, micro-analytic approach that examines the sequential organization of talk-in-interaction, focusing on how participants produce and interpret utterances in real time (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Sidnell, 2010). Moreover, the central assumption of CA is that social order is constructed and displayed through language in everyday interaction. Therefore, the analysis does not begin with predetermined categories (e.g., politeness markers or humor types), but instead focuses on how these elements emerge within the interaction itself, and how participants orient to them as meaningful actions. In this context, humor is treated not as a static form but as a collaborative, co-constructed activity shaped by turn-taking, timing, and mutual understanding.

Conversational analysis in particular, is well-suited for this study because it provides tools to examine the interactional paths in which humor arises and is interpreted by participants. It also highlights how politeness is not simply expressed through linguistic forms, but achieved through actions in talk, such as avoiding offense, managing face, and displaying sensitivity to social norms (Heritage, 2005). Ultimately, CA allows for a context-sensitive, participant-centered analysis of language in use, which aligns with the goal of this research: to uncover how humor functions not only as entertainment but also as a strategic resource for maintaining politeness in peer interactions

2.1.3 Sampling Technique

To select participants who could provide rich, relevant data for this study, a non-probability sampling method was employed, specifically a combination of purposive

sampling and snowball sampling. This dual strategy was chosen to ensure that participants shared key characteristics while also enabling broader access through peer recommendations. Purposive sampling was used first to intentionally select Master One English students from Laarbi Tebessi University. These students were chosen due to their common linguistic and educational backgrounds, which are essential for exploring how humor operates as a politeness strategy in informal peer interactions. As Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) explain, purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants based on specific purposes tied to the research questions.

Following the initial recruitment, snowball sampling expanded the participant pool. Volunteers were encouraged to invite their peers, which helped reach students who might otherwise not have participated. This approach was particularly useful in fostering natural group dynamics, as participants tended to invite individuals with whom they felt comfortable engaging in informal conversation, an essential aspect of capturing authentic interaction.

Through this combined method, two focus groups were formed. Each group participated in a 40-minute session, followed by a final one-hour joint session to facilitate interaction across groups. This sampling technique not only supported the informal, peer-based context necessary for exploring the natural emergence of humor and politeness strategies but also ensured that the selected population of advanced language learners provided a coherent communicative context. Their interactions reflect a blend of linguistic awareness, cultural norms, and social dynamics, making them particularly suitable for analyzing subtle pragmatic features such as humor and politeness strategies.

Overall, the choice of Master One EFL students and the focus on informal interaction are methodologically and theoretically justified, providing a rich platform for investigating how humor and politeness co-occur in actual discourse within an Algerian academic setting.

2.1.4 Population, Sampling, and Recruitment Process

The participants in this study were Master One Language Science students enrolled in the English Department at Laarbi Tebessi University during the academic year 2024–2025. A total of 13 participants took part in the study: six students from M1 LS G2 and seven students from M1 LS G1, divided into two focus groups. The groups were later brought together for a final joint session, allowing for broader interaction and increased variability in conversational dynamics (10 students had the chance to join the final joint group).

All participants were advanced EFL learners with shared academic experiences and comparable language proficiency, making them suitable for examining informal peer-to-peer communication. While demographic details such as age and gender were not used as primary selection criteria, the composition of the groups naturally included a mix of both male and female students. This diversity allowed for the spontaneous emergence of varied linguistic behaviors, including those possibly influenced by gender dynamics.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and voluntarily agreed to take part in the recorded sessions. Before data collection, all participants were briefed and given the opportunity to ask questions. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any time were respected throughout the research process.

The decision to focus on this participant group stems from their linguistic competence, shared educational environment, and familiarity with each other, factors that contributed to creating a relaxed setting where humor and politeness could naturally surface during interaction. Their conversations, recorded in informal contexts, formed the primary data-set for the conversation analysis conducted in this study.

The researchers initially approached Master One students from the English Department at Laarbi Tebessi University in person, outside their classrooms. This location

was intentionally chosen to create an informal, non-intrusive atmosphere and to facilitate convenient access to potential participants.

After assembling the participant group, the researchers proposed the creation of a social media group to provide further clarification and to provide scheduling. The participants collectively chose Instagram as the preferred social media. Once the group was created and all participants were added, the following introductory message was sent:

"Salam Alikom everyone,

First of all, I want to sincerely thank you for participating in this focus group. Your participation is truly appreciated.

We've created this group to give you a brief explanation of the upcoming sessions and their process. During the session, you'll take part in a natural, informal conversation with your peers, a casual conversation, like how you do in your daily interactions with each other. The discussion will be recorded (with your consent) and later analyzed for research purposes. There are no right or wrong answers, just be yourselves and enjoy the interaction."

This approach ensured transparency; participant comfort; volunteering; and informed consent, all in line with ethical research practices.

2.1.5 Focus Groups: Rationale, Set-up, and Data Collection Procedure

The use of focus groups in this study was adapted from traditional qualitative research approaches to serve the specific needs of Conversation Analysis (CA). Rather than collecting opinions or thematic content as in standard focus group methodology (Krueger & Casey, 2015), the primary aim was to create a naturalistic context in which spontaneous interaction could occur, enabling the observation of how humor and politeness strategies emerge and function in authentic peer discourse.

Focus groups were selected because they offer a flexible and socially dynamic setting conducive to natural conversation. Since participants already knew each other and shared

academic and linguistic backgrounds, the group format encouraged comfortable, informal interaction that mirrors real-life peer communication, essential for examining authentic politeness and humor usage (Wilkinson, 2004). This participant-led approach, with no imposed discussion themes, allowed speakers to shift topics freely, increasing the likelihood that humor and politeness would arise organically rather than as responses to researcher intervention.

This adaptation aligns with CA principles, which value naturally occurring data and discourage artificial manipulation of talk (Sidnell, 2010). The focus group thus served as a data collection environment specifically tailored for CA analysis, where elements such as turn-taking, overlapping speech, self-repair, laughter, and mitigation devices could be studied in their natural context.

In standard qualitative research, focus groups are used to generate discussions around specific topics (Krueger & Casey, 2015). This adaptation of focus groups aligns with the CA perspective, which values naturally occurring data and discourages the artificial manipulation of talk (Sidnell, 2010). The setting thus provided both environmental validity and sufficient structure to ensure consistent data collection.

2.1.5.1 Recording Environment and Technical Set-up

To ensure optimal recording conditions, researchers arranged with university library staff to use the Sports Section of the library—a typically unoccupied and acoustically calm area ideal for focus group discussions. Participants responded positively to this setting, expressing comfort and ease, which supported the study's aim of capturing authentic interaction. For the audio documentation, two smartphones were positioned discreetly within the conversation circle to ensure clear, uninterrupted recording, with the second device serving as backup against technical failure. Each session began with a 10-minute unrecorded

warm-up conversation, allowing participants to acclimate to the setting and build rapport before transitioning smoothly into the recorded portion (Sacks et al., 1974).

2.1.5.2 Data Collection Process

The data collection process prioritized creating a relaxed, naturalistic environment aligned with CA principles. Participants were welcomed in an informal pre-session where the study's purpose was re-explained and consent forms were distributed and signed, assuring anonymity, voluntary participation, and withdrawal rights. Sessions were scheduled to minimize academic disruption around participants' availability.

Three focus group sessions were conducted: two 40-minute sessions (one with each group) and one combined one-hour session involving both groups. All sessions were audio-recorded with prior consent and remained entirely participant-led, allowing for the natural emergence of humor and politeness without researcher interference.

2.1.5 Pilot Study

Before conducting the main data collection, an informal pilot study was undertaken to evaluate the feasibility and naturalness of the conversational environment. One of the researchers approached a group of Master Two EFL students at Laarbi Tebessi University and requested to join them during an informal gathering, explaining that the study aimed to explore features of daily, spontaneous interactions. The researcher clarified that no recording would take place and that the purpose of the pilot was solely observational. This approach was ethically motivated to create a low-pressure atmosphere, encouraging participants to feel at ease and engage in natural discourse without the influence of a formal research setting. The students welcomed the researcher and resumed their conversation while the observation was conducted discreetly. The session provided valuable insight into how humor and politeness strategies emerge in unscripted, informal talk among peers. It also demonstrated

that the participants responded positively to the idea of contributing to a research project framed casually and respectfully.

The choice not to use mobile phones or any recording devices during the pilot proved effective in maintaining the participants' comfort and spontaneity. This initial session confirmed that an informal setting could facilitate the emergence of authentic conversational features central to the study. Furthermore, the pilot reinforced the relevance of CA as the primary methodological framework, as it showed that interactional dynamics such as turn-taking, laughter, teasing, and polite negotiation could arise without external prompting or thematic guidance, supporting earlier foundational insights by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974).

2.1.6 Data Transcription and Analysis

After collecting the audio recordings of the focus group conversations, the data were transcribed using CA transcription conventions, primarily those developed by Gail Jefferson (2004). These conventions provide a detailed representation of spoken interaction, including pauses, overlaps, intonation, laughter, self-repair, and emphasis, all of which are essential for analyzing how humor and politeness are constructed and understood in conversation.

The transcription process was conducted manually, allowing the researchers to become deeply familiar with the data. This step was crucial for identifying interactional moments where humor and politeness emerged, often through nuanced timing, shared understanding, or the strategic use of mitigation devices. Transcription was not treated as a mere technical step but as a form of initial analysis, where the researchers began noticing recurring patterns, deviations, and turn-taking structures that signaled interactional phenomena of interest (Ten Have, 2007).

Once transcribed, the data were analyzed sequentially using CA principles. Each segment of conversation was examined to understand:

- How turns at talk are organized (e.g., who initiates a humorous exchange, how others respond),
- What resources are used to display politeness (e.g., laughter, hedging, indirectness),
- How participants orient to each other's talk, particularly in maintaining affiliation or avoiding face-threatening acts; and how humor contributes to the overall management of interactional norms and social relationships.

Rather than quantifying instances of humor or politeness, the analysis focused on how these behaviors functioned within the evolving dynamics of the conversation. Special attention was given to how speakers co-constructed humorous moments and how these were interpreted by their peers, either as affiliative (supportive) or disaffiliative (challenging) responses.

This interpretive approach helped reveal the interactive roles humor plays in peer-group communication, such as diffusing tension, asserting identity, or negotiating social alignment, all of which tie directly into broader politeness strategies as theorized by Brown and Levinson (1987).

2.1.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity was a central concern throughout the research process. In alignment with the ethical standards of qualitative research involving human participants, several measures were implemented to ensure the privacy, autonomy, and well-being of all individuals involved (British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2018).

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before their involvement in the study. They were provided with a clear explanation of the research aims, procedures, and the nature of the focus group discussions. Participants were also informed that the study would involve audio-recordings for academic purposes, and they were reassured that participation was entirely voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time without consequences.

Confidentiality and anonymity were preserved by assigning pseudonyms to all participants in the transcripts and final write-up. No real names or identifying details appear in the presentation or publication of the data. The recordings and transcripts were stored securely and accessed only by the primary researchers.

In designing the focus group setting, care was taken to ensure that participants felt comfortable and respected, particularly since informal interactions may touch on sensitive or humorous topics. The informal warm-up conversation before recording also served to build rapport and reduce the stress associated with being recorded.

Additionally, since humor and politeness involve interpersonal dynamics, the researchers remained attentive to power relations, group sensitivity, and participant comfort throughout the sessions. Any moment perceived as uncomfortable or potentially face-threatening was reviewed with ethical caution during transcription and analysis.
This research adhered to the ethical principles of non-maleficence,

2.2 Section Two: Data Analysis

2.2.1 Analytical Framework

This study employs CA as the primary analytical framework, providing a detailed, data-driven approach to understanding social interaction. CA focuses on the micro-level organization of talk, emphasizing how participants produce and interpret conversational actions in real time. This approach is especially suited for analyzing humor as a politeness strategy because it allows detailed examination of turn-taking, repair mechanisms, laughter, and other interactional features that help manage face and social relationships.

The focus group recordings were manually transcribed by the researchers following Jeffersonian transcription conventions. This method captures not only the spoken words but also important paralinguistic features such as pauses, overlapping speech, intonation, and laughter. Manual transcription allowed careful attention to conversational nuances essential

for identifying humor-related cues and understanding their pragmatic effects within the flow of conversation.

The analytical procedure involved several key steps:

1. Manual transcription of all recorded focus group interactions by the researchers.
2. Identification of sequences where humor was used, including banter, teasing, irony, and playful remarks.
3. Sequential analysis to observe how humor is initiated, acknowledged, and responded to by participants.
4. Examination of how humor functions as a politeness strategy, including face-saving, mitigation of criticism, and alignment.
5. Consideration of group solidarity as it relates to humor use.

By combining CA with Brown and Livenson's (1987) politeness theory, alongside Martin's Humor Style Questionnaire (2003), this chapter explores how humor operates not only as entertainment but as a strategic tool for maintaining social harmony and negotiating interpersonal relations in informal EFL peer conversations.

2.2.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation

1. Situation One

P1: books

P2: books? What is a book?

(All the group laughing)

P2 and P3: what is a book

P1: we can't skip, like we have to read everything

P3: Harry Potter

P2: never read one in my life, and that's disgusting

(laughing)

Analysis:

The humor type is identified as banter due to the playful and light-hearted exchanges between P1, P2, and P3. When P2 asks, “What is a book?” **“Sarcastic tone”** in response to P1’s mention of books, it sets the tone for a humorous interaction. This rhetorical question is not meant to be taken seriously; rather, it invites laughter and encourages a playful atmosphere, thereby intensifying interest in the topic through an unexpected and comical response (Strategy 3: Intensify interest to H).

The repetition of “what Is a book” by both P2 and P3 further amplifies the banter, as they join in on the joke, creating a collective moment of levity. This moment reflects a shared in-group identity, where the participants present themselves as peers with a common generational perspective that views traditional reading with humorous skepticism (Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers).

The humor function is categorized as affiliative humor because the exchanges aim to build rapport and strengthen social connections within the group. For instance, when P3 mentions “Harry Potter,” it serves as a reference that many in the group can relate to, presupposing shared cultural knowledge and raising common ground (Strategy 7: Presuppose/raise/assert common ground). P2’s joking remark, “never read one in my life, and that’s disgusting,” exaggerates the claim in a humorous way that avoids actual offense and invites agreement on a playful stance towards reading (Strategy 5: Seek agreement).

This kind of affiliative humor, expressed through mutual teasing and shared laughter, aligns with the use of jokes (Strategy 8: Joke) as a means of softening any potentially face-threatening admissions (such as not reading books) and instead framing them as socially acceptable within the group’s humorous context. As a result, the interaction fosters a warm, inclusive environment where participants strengthen their social bonds and minimize social distance through collective amusement.

2. Situation Two

P1: ah, by the way, P2, can I know why did you laugh at my Instagram story?

P2: Which one? I laughed at a lot of your stories

(laughing)

P1: The one about Harry Potter book

P2: Because it's cringe

(sarcastically)

P1: What do you mean? So many people liked it, why it always has to be you?

P2: Exactly, I did it on purpose, cause I know that girls want to be liked, and girls always like each other's stories

(sarcastically)

P1: hmm, so you want to impress me

P2: no, no, wait, not to impress you! Who are you to impress? Come on. Wait let's…

P1: I'm *** (saying her name)

P2: let's settle this… yeah, I know that's you're *** (mocking her tone), and never marry a *** (her family name) person

(P1 laughing)

Analysis:

In this interaction, sarcasm is prominently used by P2 when they refer to P1's Instagram story about Harry Potter as "cringe." This remark functions as an On-Record Politeness strategy (Strategy 1), as it presents a direct and unambiguous critique, even if it carries an ironic tone. The straightforwardness of labeling the story "cringe" constitutes an FTA, yet it is delivered within the boundaries of familiar rapport, which helps to mitigate potential offense. P2 further elaborates, saying, "I did it on purpose, cause I know that girls want to be liked, and girls always like each other's stories." This statement moves into an

Off-Record Politeness strategy (Strategy 12). Rather than directly targeting P1, the critique is veiled through a generalization about social media behavior and gender norms. This indirectness allows P2 to soften the impact of their criticism, maintaining deniability while still conveying a pointed opinion.

The humor in this exchange is identified as aggressive humor, as it critiques and mocks the other's behavior, yet it does so in a way that maintains group cohesion. P2's sarcasm, especially the line "Exactly, I did it on purpose" illustrates their deliberate attempt to challenge and amuse simultaneously. However, even this confrontational humor reflects Positive Politeness Strategy 8: Joke, where the use of sarcasm serves as a socially acceptable way to express critique within the bounds of playfulness. By laughing and exaggerating the absurdity of social media validation, P2 creates space for humor to diffuse tension rather than escalate it. When P1 asks, "So you want to impress me," P2's comeback, "Who are you to impress?", adds another layer of teasing. Though this could be seen as undermining P1's self-image, it remains embedded in a shared, humorous context, signaling that the remark is not meant to alienate but to engage playfully. P2 continues this tone by mimicking P1's voice and mockingly saying, "and never marry a *** (her family name) person," a joke that references P1's identity. This part of the exchange highlights Positive Politeness Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers, as it draws upon shared background knowledge and insider references, such as Instagram behavior, tone imitation, and cultural or familial jokes. These in-group signals reinforce familiarity and solidarity, even as teasing occurs.

3. Situation Three

P1: P6, you didn't talk

P6: I like to listen more than talking

P4: why are you here?

(laughing)

P2: aaah, we have a listener

P1: she’s an auditory person

P3: good question, P4

(laughing)

(all the group laughing because of the awkward silent moment)

P3 and P2 addressing P6: say anything, don’t be shy, say anything… sing

(laughing)

P6: P2 نولي يستفزني، اصلا…

(Laughing)

P1: تولي؟ وش

(Laughing)

P2: انايا عمري نوليلك

(a Ray song lyrics)

(P2 and P6 laughin)

P2: sorry, ايا كملوا

(P1 laughing)

P6: نولي introvert, in front of other people, malgré الكل نعرفكم, بصح كل واحد وحدو نولي عادي

P1: she’s a shy person, she’s a shy person

P2: You’re an introvert?

P6: yes, yes

(laughing)

P3: you don’t talk like that

P6: yes, yes I know

P2: little bit shy

P6: نولي وحدو واحد كل normal

P1: she's an auditory person, she likes to listen

P3: when it comes to the group, she's a bit nervous

P6: yes

P2: but when you listen you have to respond at least

(Laughing)

P6: I like to analyze

P2: to give your opinion. Ah you like to analyze, huh, mmm

(Sarcastic)

P6: I'm doing their job, ال نعطيك مبعد conclusion

(laughing)

(all the group laughing)

Analysis:

In this scenario, Self-deprecating humor is showcased by P6 when they describe themselves as "an introvert" and express that they become "nervous" in group settings. This acknowledgment of their shyness and tendency to listen rather than speak is a form of self-deprecation, as P6 is humorously downplaying their own social skills. For example, when P6 states, "I like to analyze," it reveals a humorous acceptance of their quieter nature, suggesting that they may not be the most vocal participant but still contribute in their own way. This type of humor helps to create a relatable moment, allowing others to see P6's vulnerabilities, which fosters a sense of camaraderie. The humor thus functions as a way to maintain face while engaging with the group dynamic, consistent with Positive Politeness Strategy 8: Joke, as P6 uses humor to soften self-disclosure and to avoid making the group feel awkward in the face of her silence.

This type of humor also aligns with Self-enhancing humor, as P6 uses it to cope with their introverted nature and present it in a more positive, light-hearted manner. When P6

jokes, “I’m doing their job, مبعد نعطيك ال conclusion,” they are not only making light of their quietness, but also reframing it as an active contribution, reinforcing a sense of personal agency and intelligence. This playful self-characterization also illustrates Strategy 1 of Positive Politeness: Notice/attend to H’s wants, needs, or interests, as P6 frames their quietness in a way that aligns with the group’s preference for active participation, showing awareness of group norms while still asserting their identity in a humorous and face-saving way.

The group’s response further highlights how Affiliative Humor supports Positive Politeness. For instance, when P2 playfully urges P6 to “say anything, don’t be shy, say anything… sing,” the teasing tone helps to encourage participation without pressure. This type of remark is delivered jokingly (Strategy 8) and is grounded in a shared group identity that accepts and appreciates differences, reflecting Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers. P1’s earlier description of P6 as “a shy person” similarly reinforces a shared understanding and familiarity, which signals that P6 is known and accepted by the group. This shared rapport reduces the social distance and helps maintain a light, inclusive atmosphere.

4. Situation Four

P1: There was a lot of cheating, a lot, especially… it was only arguments

P2: It was an exam. Actually… I cheated in all the quizzes

(P1 and P4 laughing)

P3: I used ChatGPT

(P2 and P3 laughing)

P2: I was busy cheating aaahhh

(all the group laughing)

P1: she was busy telling us the definitions and in the meantime, we took the advantage of cheating

(laughing)

P4: that's perfect

(laughing)

P1: it wasn't the cheating itself, it was the fun of it

P2: the flavor

P3: so fun

(P2 and P3 laughing)

P1: yeah, it was so fun, we were at the back, we were cheating, we were waiting for, how do you mean… الخباشين

P4: I'm so anxious, I can't have fun

P2: You're anxious so you can't cheat?

P4: Yeah

(laughing)

Analysis:

This interaction showcases how positive politeness is strategically enacted through affiliative humor, particularly in the form of playful teasing, to maintain group cohesion and reinforce social bonds. The participants use humor not merely to entertain, but to navigate a potentially face-threatening topic, academic dishonesty, in a way that strengthens their in-group identity. For instance, the admission "P2: I was busy cheating aaahhh" accompanied by group laughter exemplifies joking (Sub-strategy 8), which softens the seriousness of the topic while inviting shared amusement. This is furthered by P1's teasing yet inclusive comment, "she was busy telling us the definitions and, in the meantime, we took the advantage of cheating," which playfully critiques a peer without causing offense, instead encouraging laughter and bonding. The participants also create common ground (Sub-strategy 7) by reminiscing about shared experiences, "P1: yeah, it was so fun, we were at the back, we were

cheating…الخبآشين", thereby reinforcing their collective student identity (Sub-strategy 4). The line "it wasn't the cheating itself, it was the fun of it. P2: the flavor. P3: so fun" further illustrates how humor is used to highlight the social, not moral, meaning of the act, emphasizing solidarity and mutual understanding rather than wrongdoing. Even when P4 expresses anxiety, P2's playful retort, "You're anxious so you can't cheat?" is not a dismissal, but an inclusionary move that respects P4's feelings while weaving them into the group's shared narrative. In this way, the humor sustains positive face for all participants, allowing them to joke about rule-breaking without fear of judgment, and to do so within a supportive, face-enhancing environment.

5. **Situation Five**

P1: a man should be masculine enough to put his woman in her femininity, زوز في متجيش feminine

P2: tell that to the feminists

(All the group laughing)

P4: I totally disagree with everyone. It's not about a man being a provider

P7: if you were born in the 16th century you were have been burned like a witch

السحرات زي حرقوك رام الوسطى العصور في جيتي كون

(All the group laughing)

P4: it's not always a man who should provide for you, you can work and provide for yourself

P2: ah, we got ourselves a strong independent woman

(Sarcastic)

(All the group laughing)

P4: no, I'm not speaking about the nature, I'm saying that you can do it yourself with or without a man

Analysis:

In this interaction, mocking humor is evident in the way participants engage with one another, particularly in the exchanges between P2 and P4. For instance, when P1 states that "a man should be masculine enough to put his woman in her femininity," P2 responds with "tell that to the feminists," a mocking retort that implies criticism of P1's traditional view. This sarcastic comment functions as Positive Politeness Strategy 8: Joke, using humor to reduce the potential face threat posed by disagreement, while still expressing a contrasting stance. At the same time, the reference to "feminists" and traditional gender roles draws on shared cultural references, reflecting Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers, as the comment relies on commonly understood social narratives and group knowledge.

The mocking tone Is further amplified when P7 jokes about being "burned like a witch in the 16th century," a humorous exaggeration of being misunderstood or silenced. P4's more serious response introduces tension, but the laughter that follows suggests that the mockery is understood within the bounds of familiar rapport, preventing any escalation. This use of sarcasm and exaggerated metaphors allows participants to challenge each other's viewpoints while maintaining a playful tone.

The humor here is classified as aggressive humor, as it involves ridicule and sarcasm directed at the ideas of others. For example, P2's remark, "ah, we got ourselves a strong independent woman," directed at P4's self-assuredness, is a clear attempt to belittle the point through sarcasm. Yet again, the laughter from the group signals the remark's humorous intent. This line operates as Strategy 8: Joke, softening the criticism and allowing it to be interpreted as banter rather than a hostile attack. Furthermore, the interaction as a whole reflects Negative Politeness Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement, as participants use humor to indirectly express dissent, avoiding direct confrontation. Instead of openly refuting each other, they mock and tease, allowing disagreement to emerge through laughter and irony. This method of avoiding head-on opposition helps protect the negative face of the interlocutor by

minimizing imposition, all while keeping the social atmosphere light and cooperative. Through a combination of Positive Politeness (Strategy 4 and Strategy 8) and Negative Politeness (Strategy 6), the group skillfully navigates disagreement, reinforces group identity, and sustains social harmony in the face of differing views.

6. **Situation Six**

P1: فات لي العام تع homework ال اك لا و حقا، ابيه

P4 (confused): Bro, I was so lost during that presentation. Nothing made sense.

P2 (laughing): Same. I told you we should've brought Red Bull and just enjoy the mess.

P1: I swear that homework was driving me crazy. I felt like we'd never finish it on time.

P2 (laughing): I told you we could just submit it with a note saying "FINALLY!"

P3: yeah, I remember it, there was a lot of information

Analysis:

The conversation is characterized by light-hearted joking as participants share humorous reflections on a particularly challenging homework assignment. P1 initiates with an exaggerated complaint, saying, "I swear that homework was driving me crazy," which sets a humorous and relatable tone. P2 builds on this mood by replying, "I told you we should've brought Red Bull and just enjoy the mess," transforming a stressful moment into a shared joke. These exchanges clearly reflect Positive Politeness Strategy 8: Joke, where humor is used not just for entertainment, but to soften frustration and create a supportive, non-threatening atmosphere.

The participants' use of Affiliative Humor serves to reinforce in-group solidarity, particularly through references that resonate with their shared academic life. P2's comment about bringing Red Bull and the follow-up idea of submitting the homework with a triumphant "FINALLY!" note draw on a shared understanding of student struggles and exam stress, making these remarks instances of Positive Politeness Strategy 7: Assert common

ground. By referencing this collective hardship, participants signal alignment in experience and perspective, minimizing social distance and emphasizing group cohesion. Further, the way the group embraces these shared experiences and specific references to their academic context, such as P4's confession of being "so lost during that presentation," met with laughter and empathy, reflects Positive Politeness Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers. These exchanges are rooted in a shared identity as students navigating similar challenges, allowing participants to speak with familiarity and comfort. This use of in-group references helps maintain a conversational tone of closeness and inclusion.

7. **Situation Seven**

P1: I actually struggled in the justification, like why? We give… like I prefer just answer and there's no justification

(laughing)

P4: The justification actually exists in the definition itself.

P3: what do you mean you struggled? I gave you everything

(P1 and P4 laughing)

P1: That's why I struggled. I don't like this

Analysis:

In this exchange, friendly banter is characterized by light-hearted, playful interactions among participants, particularly as they navigate an academic challenge related to justifying answers. P1 expresses frustration, jokingly stating, "I prefer just an answer and there's no justification," which elicits laughter from P4 and P3. This shared amusement reflects a tone of Affiliative Humor, where the participants bond over common academic annoyances.

The exchange is filled with playful teasing, such as when P4 responds with, "The justification exists in the definition itself," which is not intended as a critique but rather a humorous exaggeration delivered in a friendly tone. This playful retort signals Positive

Politeness Strategy 7: Assert common ground, as it highlights a shared understanding of academic tasks and the frustrations they bring. The participants all recognize the underlying difficulty of justifying answers, and by joking about it, they reinforce their mutual experiences.

P3's remark, "What do you mean you struggled? I gave you everything," further demonstrates Positive Politeness Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers. This playful challenge is rooted in their shared history of academic support, and the humor here depends on mutual familiarity, it's a remark that could only be made within a group that knows and trusts each other. The use of "I gave you everything" also suggests an ongoing, collaborative relationship, reinforcing their social bond.

The use of laughter and exaggerated expressions softens any potential face-threat that might arise from P1's admission of difficulty. Rather than being mocked or corrected, P1's frustration is met with empathy and humor. The laughter shared after P1's remark validates their experience in a light-hearted way, further reflecting Strategy 7: Assert common ground, as the group treats the struggle as a shared and humorous aspect of their academic lives.

8. Situation Eight

P3: you're saying that you wanna marry and be treated as a princess?

(laughing)

P4: yup, exactly

(laughing)

P2: Yeah, cause girls can't do anything by their own, they just need a man who provides for them

(sarcastically) (laughing)

Analysis:

In this interaction, irony is used strategically to critique and subvert the traditional expectation that women should rely on men for support. When P3 expresses a desire to "marry and be treated like a princess," the remark is immediately picked up and reframed by another participant with the sarcastic question, "You're saying that you wanna marry and be treated as a princess?" followed by laughter. This humorous framing clearly functions as Positive Politeness Strategy 8: Joke, where teasing transforms a potentially sensitive view into a lighthearted, socially acceptable exchange. The shared laughter confirms that the group interprets this moment as playful rather than confrontational.

This form of humor, while affiliative on the surface, also exemplifies Aggressive Humor because it directly challenges and mocks gender stereotypes. For example, P2's sarcastic remark, "Yeah, cause girls can't do anything by their own," openly ridicules the outdated notion of female dependence on men. Yet, the delivery, accompanied by laughter and a tone of irony, helps recontextualize this critique as a shared in-group joke rather than a hostile attack. This reflects Positive Politeness Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers, where the group collectively engages with familiar cultural tropes to signal mutual understanding and reinforce their social bond. At the same time, the use of irony and sarcasm to express dissent aligns with Negative Politeness Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement. Rather than confronting traditional views head-on, the speakers mask critique in humor, allowing them to challenge without offending. This mitigates the face-threatening nature of discussing sensitive gender roles by delivering critique indirectly, wrapped in irony, which enables participants to save face while still engaging in meaningful commentary.

Contextual variables:

According to Brown and Levinson's contextual variables, the social distance (D) is minimal, as the participants are classmates and friends who interact comfortably; the relative

power (P) is balanced, with neither holding authority; and the rank of imposition ® is low, given that the exchanges are casual and free from serious demands or sensitive matters.

2.2.3 Summary of the Findings

Throughout the interactions, affiliative banter emerged as the most frequently employed humor style. This style, characterized by playful teasing, shared laughter, and a cooperative tone, consistently served to reduce social distance and reinforce a sense of belonging among the participants.

2.2.3.1 Affiliative Humor and Positive Politeness Strategies

This finding parallels Febrianto (2019), who, in an analysis of the sitcom Friends, identified humorous phatic utterances (jokes, teasing, playful banter) as fostering rapport, easing tension, and sustaining interpersonal engagement, primarily through solidarity strategies. Similarly, Haugh (2011), in a study of early-stage interactions, showed how humor, particularly teasing and self-deprecatory remarks, played a crucial role in building rapport and managing face needs. Humor was typically viewed as polite when it helped defuse tension or ease disagreement.

The frequent employment of Positive Politeness strategies such as joking (Strategy 8), using in-group identity markers (Strategy 4), asserting common ground (Strategy 7), and seeking agreement (Strategy 5) is also evident. This directly corroborates Bell (2018), who, in reviewing empirical research, highlights that humor facilitates positive politeness by fostering solidarity, rapport, and shared identity. The use of humor to address topics like shyness, academic difficulties, gender roles, and social media behavior in a lighthearted manner, thus avoiding direct confrontation and promoting cohesion, serves as a practical demonstration of these strategies.

2.2.3.2 Sarcasm, Irony, and Strategic Mitigation

The analysis also identified the use of sarcasm and irony, particularly in mocking social media validation and challenging gender views. Despite a potentially aggressive tone, these were mitigated by familiar and relaxed rapport among participants. Positive Politeness Strategy 8 (Joke) and Strategy 4 (Use in-group identity markers) helped transform potential criticism into socially acceptable teasing. This directly parallels the findings of He, Chen, and Dong (2023), whose study of Chinese stand-up comedy showed how humorous mockery could be recontextualized as affiliative rather than antagonistic through politeness strategies like adopting a playful tone, referencing shared experiences, and signaling in-group membership. Their work, like the present analysis, demonstrates how potentially offensive humor can be transformed into amusement, reinforcing solidarity and and closeness.

2.2.3.3 Self-Deprecating Humor and Face Management

The appearance of self-deprecating humor, such as a participant jokingly describing herself as an introvert, supported identity expression while minimizing face threats and inviting empathy. This extended to self-enhancing humor, reframing introversion as an analytical strength. This finding is consistent with Saunders (1998), who examined humor as a face-saving strategy during neuropsychological examinations, demonstrating how patients used humor as a defensive mechanism to protect their social image during face-threatening acts. Similarly, Haugh (2011) highlighted how self-deprecatory remarks played a crucial role in managing face needs in initial interactions, underscoring humor's role in vulnerability and self-presentation.

2.2.3.4 The Interactive Role of Laughter and Contextual Interpretation

Laughter played a central role across all situations, functioning as a paralinguistic cue for shared understanding. It helped participants reinterpret awkward or critical moments as humorous rather than confrontational. This aligns with Sheikhan (2024), whose framework

for responses to conversational humor emphasizes that the success of humor as a politeness strategy is not solely determined by the speaker's intent but by how it is interpreted and responded to by the hearer. Laughter, in this context, serves as a clear signal of mutual alignment and acceptance of the humorous frame, confirming the interactive co-construction of politeness.

2.2.3.5 Humor as a Deliberate and Pragmatic Strategy

Overall, humor was not used randomly or merely for entertainment; rather, it functioned as a deliberate and strategic component of the learners' informal discourse. Humor served politeness functions, minimizing face threats, managing disagreement, and enhancing social solidarity. This directly corroborates Bell (2018), who argues that humor is not peripheral but central to politeness, used strategically to navigate face-threatening acts by embedding critique or sensitive topics within humorous frames. Furthermore, Ikoro, Onyinyechi Stella (2024) reinforces this by identifying "joke/play techniques" in literary dialogue as an intentional form of face-saving strategy that eases tension and maintains interpersonal harmony, demonstrating that authors depict humor as a deliberate communicative practice.

The application of Brown and Levinson's contextual variables, low social distance (D), equal power (P) dynamics, and minimal rank of imposition (R), describes an ideal environment for humor to function as a face-saving and rapport-building tool. This aligns with Holmes (2000), who investigated how humor interacts with politeness and power dynamics in the workplace, noting that humor can soften hierarchical boundaries and mitigate power imbalances. The shared identity of the participants allowed for high tolerance of teasing, sarcasm, and irony, which were interpreted through the lens of group familiarity. This supports the idea that evaluations of humor as polite or impolite are context-dependent, as emphasized by Haugh (2011) and Bell (2018).

The data indicates that these EFL learners possess not only linguistic competence but also a profound pragmatic awareness, skillfully employing humor as a nuanced politeness strategy to navigate social dynamics and interpersonal relationships within their familiar, peer-group context.

2.3 Section Three: Discussion, Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

2.3.1 Discussion

The analysis showed that humor played a crucial role in strengthening solidarity and maintaining a positive, cooperative atmosphere among Master One EFL learners at Laarbi Tebessi University. Affiliative banter, characterized by playful teasing and shared laughter, was the dominant humor style, helping reduce social distance and reinforce group cohesion. Students skillfully used Positive Politeness strategies, like joking, using in-group language, emphasizing common ground, and seeking agreement, to navigate sensitive topics such as shyness, academic struggles, gender roles, and social media behavior without confrontation. Sarcasm and irony, though potentially harsh, were softened by strong peer rapport, while self-deprecating and self-enhancing humor allowed for personal expression and inclusion. Laughter served as a unifying cue, transforming awkward or critical moments into shared understanding. Overall, humor emerged as a deliberate and strategic tool, reflecting both the students' linguistic skills and their pragmatic sensitivity in a context of equality, familiarity, and mutual respect.

Research Question 1: What are the types and functions of humor used by Master One EFL learners at Laarbi Tebessi University?

The findings revealed that the functions and types of humor used by the participants can be summarized as follows:

1- **Types of Humor Identified:**

Affiliative Banter (Most frequent)

Playful teasing, shared laughter, and cooperative joking aimed at reinforcing group bonds (e.g., teasing about reading or academic issues).

- **Self-Deprecating Humor**

Joking at one's own expense to express humility, encourage empathy, and downplay social awkwardness (e.g., calling oneself an introvert).

- **Self-Enhancing Humor**

Reframing one's traits positively (e.g., turning introversion into analytical strength), helps to manage face and self-image.

- **Sarcasm and Irony**

Used to mock or critique (e.g., social media validation, gender stereotypes) in a playful manner that maintained social rapport due to the familiar context.

- **Teasing and Joking (Positive Politeness Strategy 8)**

Light mocking or playful challenges are intended to show closeness rather than hostility.

- **In-group Identity Humor**

Using shared knowledge, slang, or group references (Strategy 4) to signal belonging and common ground.

2- Functions of Humor:

- **Fostering Solidarity and Group Cohesion**

Humor was used to reduce social distance, promote bonding, and reinforce shared identity as classmates and friends. It helped maintain a supportive and inclusive group dynamic.

- **Mitigating Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs)**

Humor softened the impact of potentially embarrassing or confrontational topics such as shyness, academic struggles, or gender stereotypes. It acted as a face-saving device, reducing the seriousness of criticism or disagreement.

- **Enhancing Emotional Alignment**

Laughter and shared jokes signaled emotional understanding and alignment, transforming awkward or sensitive moments into playful, non-threatening exchanges.

- **Promoting Politeness and Social Harmony**

Humor was a strategic tool within Positive Politeness frameworks, helping participants show closeness, agreement, and consideration for each other's feelings.

- **Expressing Identity and Managing Self-Image**

Self-deprecating and self-enhancing humor allowed participants to express vulnerability, confidence, or personal traits without risking social penalties.

- **Challenging Norms and Expressing Critique**

Sarcasm and irony were used to question social conventions, such as gender roles or online behavior, in a humorous yet socially acceptable way.

Research Question 2: How do Master One EFL learners at Laarbi Tebessi University use humor as a politeness strategy in their informal interactions?

The analysis of informal interactions among Master One EFL learners at Laarbi Tebessi University shows that humor functions as a vital politeness strategy, promoting social cohesion and reducing interpersonal tension. Various humor styles emerge throughout the data, each playing a role in sustaining rapport and bridging social distance among participants.

Playful banter appears most frequently, as learners engage in humorous, light-hearted exchanges that foster mutual understanding and strengthen group ties. Sarcasm is notably present in Situation 2, where P2 describes P1's Instagram post as "cringe." Though seemingly critical, the humorous tone helps soften the potential face threat, illustrating Positive Politeness Strategy 1: Notice/Attend to the hearer (On-Record). In Situation 3, self-deprecating humor is used when P6 jokingly labels themselves an introvert, saying, "I like to analyze." This humorous self-portrayal promotes acceptance and aligns with Positive

Politeness Strategy 8: Use of jokes. Irony and exaggeration also surface when P2 suggests attaching a note that reads “FINALLY!” to a homework submission, using humor to cope with academic pressure in a light, indirect manner. In another example, mocking humor is used in Situation 4 when P2 sarcastically says, “tell that to the feminists,” subtly challenging societal norms while maintaining an informal, playful tone. This instance demonstrates Positive Politeness Strategy 4: Use of in-group identity markers.

Overall, the participants use humor not just for entertainment but as a strategic tool to express solidarity, ease interaction, and maintain group harmony. Through diverse humorous expressions, banter, sarcasm, self-deprecation, irony, and mockery, students successfully navigate interpersonal dynamics, manage face needs, and foster a communicative environment that is both inclusive and supportive.

2.3.2 Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications

This study highlights the role of humor as a politeness strategy in informal peer interactions among Master One EFL learners. Through the lens of Conversation Analysis and politeness theory, humor was shown to facilitate smooth turn-taking, build rapport, mitigate face-threatening acts, and reduce tension. Humor served Positive Politeness functions (enhancing solidarity), Negative Politeness functions (softening disagreement or criticism), and Bald-On-Record functions (expressing requests or comments directly).

A significant finding is that humor appeared more frequently and more naturally in the small group discussions, particularly in single-group sessions. When students were mixed across both groups, participation was less balanced; some individuals remained silent or hesitant, although they had actively used humor in their original group sessions. In the mixed-group session, instances of overlapping speech, interruptions, and multiple participants talking at the same time also complicated the interactional dynamics. These observations

emphasize that group familiarity and comfort level play an essential role in humorous and polite discourse.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings underscore the importance of designing classroom activities that promote naturalistic, collaborative communication. Teachers should encourage group tasks that allow for spontaneous speech and humor use, thus enabling learners to develop pragmatic awareness in addition to linguistic accuracy. Recognizing the social and emotional dimensions of language, especially humor, can foster learner confidence and intercultural competence in EFL contexts.

2.3.3 Limitations of the Study

While this research offers valuable insights, several limitations ~~must be~~ are acknowledged:

1. **Sampling Constraints**

The sample was limited to Master One EFL students at Laarbi Tebessi University. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all EFL learners or other academic disciplines.

2. **Challenges in Scheduling**

Although focus groups were planned as part of a structured methodology, difficulty in coordinating participants led to unscheduled delays and changes. Gathering all students at the same time proved challenging, affecting the consistency and length of sessions.

3. **Interactional Overlap**

Particularly in the mixed session, several moments involved simultaneous speech and interruption, making some utterances hard to transcribe or analyze reliably within the Conversation Analysis framework.

2.3.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations, the following recommendations are proposed for future research:

1- **Examine Aggressive and Hostile Humor**

Future studies can investigate more about how aggressive or sarcastic humor functions in peer interactions. The Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) could be used to identify individual tendencies toward affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, or self-defeating humor. Notably, aggressive humor often manifests among peers who share a close relationship, such as best friends, who may playfully use sarcasm and mockery, reflecting their intimacy and comfort with one another.

2- **Explore Impoliteness and Humor**

Research could explore how humor intersects with impoliteness, especially in competitive or critical interactions. This would extend the current study's focus on positive and mitigating functions of humor.

3- **Compare Familiar vs. Unfamiliar Groups**

More work is needed to analyze how group familiarity affects humor usage and politeness strategies, possibly through a longitudinal approach that follows the same groups over time.

4- **Use of Videotape and Multimodal Data**

Future studies may benefit from video recordings that capture non-verbal elements such as gestures, facial expressions, and laughter, essential cues in understanding humor and politeness in interaction. These recordings would allow researchers to examine the interplay between verbal and non-verbal communication, thereby enhancing the understanding of how humor functions as a politeness strategy in various contexts.

5- **Cross-Cultural Comparisons**

Expanding the sample to include learners from other universities or cultural backgrounds would allow for comparative insights into humor as a politeness strategy in different sociolinguistic contexts.

6- Reduce Group Size in Data Gathering

Researchers noticed that the number of participants in a focus group conversation significantly affects the emergence of humor usage, particularly among passive or shy individuals. Smaller groups create a more comfortable environment, facilitating greater engagement and encouraging individuals to express themselves more freely. The smaller group size encourages relaxed interactions, allowing for playful exchanges and the sharing of jokes. Conversely, in larger groups, the presence of more people can create a sense of pressure or anxiety, leading to a decrease in humor usage. Shy individuals may be hesitant to participate and talk freely, resulting in fewer humorous interactions overall. Therefore, researchers recommend using smaller group sizes to foster an environment that is more conducive to humor in future research.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological framework adopted for investigating how humor functions as a politeness strategy in informal peer conversations among Master One EFL learners at Laarbi Tebessi University. The study employed a qualitative research design, combining purposive and snowball sampling for participant recruitment and using focus group conversations as the primary data collection method. These conversations were guided by CA, which served as the analytical lens for exploring the sequential and interactive nature of humor and politeness in spontaneous discourse. These methodological decisions nevertheless provide a rigorous foundation for analyzing humor's interactional functions, as demonstrated in the following chapters. The results contribute to both discourse analysis

theory and language pedagogy by illuminating how humor operates as a strategic communicative resource among EFL learners.

General Conclusion

This study explores how is humor applied by Master One EFL learners at Laarbi Tebessi University in their informal interactions, and to examine how its functions and styles function within the framework of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. Through a deep analysis of natural conversational data, several key insights have emerged that contribute to the understanding of humor's role in informal interactions between EFL learners.

This research adopted a qualitative approach based on Conversation Analysis. The study involved 13 Master One EFL students from Laarbi Tebessi University. Data were gathered through phone-recorded, spontaneous informal conversations among the participants. These recordings were transcribed and examined using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory framework, alongside Martin's (2003) Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ). Participants were chosen through purposive snowball sampling to ensure they were actively involved in the types of interactions relevant to the research. The analysis aimed to explore the roles humor plays in these exchanges and how it functions as a politeness strategy.

The findings offer several important contributions to existing research. The study connects theoretical frameworks by showing how specific humor styles align with recognized politeness strategies, thereby providing empirical support for the connection between these two aspects of pragmatics. Additionally, It also enhances the understanding of humor in EFL outside classroom contexts by focusing on naturally occurring conversation instead of prompted responses, offering authentic insights into how humor functions in real-life language use. The findings further indicate that humor strongly serves as a politeness strategy in informal interactions among these peers. Affiliative humor, characterized by light-hearted jokes and playful exchanges, alongside banter humor type mainly function to strengthen social connections and maintain group cohesion, in line with Brown and Levinson's concept of positive politeness. Self-enhancing humor, which often comes across as clever comments about personal challenges, functions as a positive politeness strategy by allowing speakers to save face while minimizing imposition on others. Humor often served to soften FTAs, such as criticism or disagreement, showing its value as an indirect communication tool, in line with Off-Record Politeness strategy. A particularly significant finding concerning the contextual nature of humor's effectiveness, is that successful humorous exchanges relied heavily on shared cultural knowledge and established relationships among participants.

In this context, politeness helps convey respect and reduce potential conflict, while humor introduces a light-hearted tone that can diffuse tension, foster closeness, and enhance group solidarity. Together, they play a vital role in maintaining positive interpersonal dynamics. In certain informal peer contexts, humor can function as a politeness strategy, particularly when it is used intentionally to reduce social distance, manage face concerns, or maintain group cohesion ease tension, and build rapport. In these types of interactions, humor can ease potentially sensitive or uncomfortable moments by softening criticism, disagreement, or other socially risky actions.

However, the research is not without limitations. The study's focus is on a specific students population at one Algerian university, which means that the findings may not be universally applicable. Additionally, the reliance on audio recordings may have missed important non-verbal cues of humorous communication. These limitations suggest valuable directions for future research.

In closing, this research shows that humor is far more than just being a source of entertainment, it is also used to foster solidarity and build interpersonal relationships, which highlights the need for continued exploration of humor's role as a politeness strategy.

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Appendices

Group One's Session

P1: Well, it feels uncomfortable at first, but I know all of you, so it's fine I guess
P2: Ok, what's your question first?
P1: I wanted to ask you what's your favorite movie (laughing)
P2: my favorite movie is "The Lord of the Rings"
P1: why?

P2: Yeah, because I love the characters, I love the lesson behind uhh… especially to expect the unexpected, yes
P3: That's your hobby?
P2: I'm not a hobby, I'm not a hobby
(All the group laughing)
P3: I'm sorry, I'm sorry
(Laughing)
P2: You're s wrong, you're so wrong
(All the group laughing)
P3: It's Ok, it's OK… uhh,
P4: my favorite movie will be "Fast and Furious"
P1: Really? You don't enlightening us
P4: Also the main character, I love his acting
P3: The ones who's dead, the one who's by an accident?
P4: The other one.
P3: By his family
P4: Yeah
(All the group laughing)
(P4's tone of saying "family" was funny, that's why they laughed)
P1: P3, what's you favorite movie?
P3: for me, it should be "Fight Club"
P2: What? (Didn't understand him)
P1: Aaaa, yes, I really like that movie, you should watch it
P3: Yeah, I recommend it, too (excited)
P2: I don't know it, honestly saying
P1: don't explain more
(laughing)
P3: we don't talk about fighting, that's the first rule
(all the group laughing)
P1: yes, we don't talk about the fighting
(laughing)
P4: so you let us to watch it and find what…
P3: Yes,
P1: P5, what's your favorite movie?
P5: so, my favorite movie is "Django Unchained". It's about that black person who kills the white people, but I prefer if he was white
(All the group laughing)
P3: Yes, I like that movie too
P1: I think it's my turn
P4: Yeah, it's your turn
P3: The black revolution, and…
P5: I prefer the white revolution
P3: as you like
(P3 and P5 laughing)
P2: racism
P3: Yes, racism and…
P5: black people now start seeing themselves more than white people (sarcastic)
P4: and migration as well
P7: for me, I don't have a favorite movie, to be honest. But if I need to pick one, I think Shutter Island. Because I didn't expect the plot twist. It's mind-blowing (impressed)

P7: ah, yes
P2: I'm not a big fan of it
P1: you have to watch it, every time you re-watch it, have an experience
P2: you need to send me this. Can you tell me the name?
P1: Shutter Island. S-H-U-T-T-E-R. I-S-L-A-N-D.
P2: P6, what's your favorite book?
P6: I'm not interested in watching movies, so…
P7: it's ok, you can tell us about the Prophets stories.
P1: Yes, your favorite book, or your favorite series, anything.
P6: I don't know.
P7: Maybe your favorite series?
P6: I don't have a specific idea now.
P1: Ah, okay.
P3: What do you do in your rest time?
P5: I think we should say some stupid stuff, because we always do serous talking, and start with those silly words.
(P1 laughing)
P1: P7, What's your favorite movie?
P7: Well, for me, I'm not a big fan of watching movies. However, I watched a series recently. It's unique by John Goldberg.
P1: Did you like it?
Yeah, season 2 was fascinating. It was the best. Like season 2, season 3. It was interesting. And I think there was some sort of exaggeration in the 2nd season.
P6: for me, I'm a big fan of reading books and art.
P7: yeah, same, as I said I'm not a big fan of movies, I like philosophical books, and the most interesting one is Dostoevsky's book by Nietzsche.
P3: yeah, I like his mind. He's got a great mind. He thinks about everything (impressed)
P5: Yeah, yeah. It's like philosophical books are interesting, however the thing that I hate about them or dislike is their view towards women.
P4: their what?
P1: their view towards women!
P5: oh, yeah
P7: like, they always underestimate them and, like…
P3: They are right, as they should
(sarcastic)
P1 addressing P5: Someone here wants to say something, I can see it in his face.
(Sarcastic, laughing)
P3: I'm kidding. I don't underestimate women. But men have the tendency to think that men are tougher and more…
P3: Exactly, they are not the same.
P2: What?
P1: I think they are not the same, men and women are different
P7: It is something good, actually
(laughing)
P5: No, no. It's not the same, like…
I mean, it's a type of mentality, in a way, we (men) are more logical than women
P2: We are emotional (women), and you are logic (men)
P5: I know…
P2: but we can use our minds, too. But I feel like women are emotional more than being logically.

P5: men use emotions as well, but you (women) choose to be emotional
P7: hormones! (Defensive)
P1: When I said men and women are different I didn't mean it in that way. I mean it emotionally. It's not about hormones.
P5: For example, if I want to start using emotion, I will do. And if I want to use logic, I will do. So it's my choice. When women or any woman say that I am an emotional creature, it's her choice, but she wasn't born that way
P2: can I say something? In this way you say that the woman are the same of men. And this is like…
P5: No, it's not. It's the mindset
P2: No, it's not about the mindset. We are not like you (men) Yes. Because… we don't, for example, solve the problems in the same way. We don't think in the same way. We have, for example, a high social intelligence. However, you don't have a high emotional intelligence.
P5: Yes, I have high emotional intelligence
P2: No, you don't. You are an exception you are an exception. But men, generally, don't have high emotional intelligence
P7: men use more logic and women use more emotions برك
(Nonchalant)
P1: you can control your emotions while we can't, simple
P5: when a new born baby comes to life, her environment tells her to be an emotional creature, she'll grow up as an emotional creature, simple. If we put logic inside the head of the woman, she will be logical
(Nonchalant)
P1: Wait, it's not about always mentally or psychologically, it's biologically.
P2: Biological and physical as well
P1: Physical appearance, chemical…
P5: I know, biologically we are different. It's different. Biologically we are different, but mentally we are not.
P1:Yes, he got my idea.
P5: I got your idea, but it's kind of old. It's a new one for you, guys
P1: No, no, no. He always gives us the new information
(laughing)
P5: Because it's new. Did you think about saying that?
P2: I'm not going to convince you about something that you already don't believe in, but believe me, the women and the men don't share the same mindset. This is the fact that you have to believe
P1: No, he's saying that when we are born…
P2: Yes, I know. I know that we are an empty box, like… We're born like an empty paper, but we're not the same, we still, like, think as a women and we still think as men.
P3: So you believe in transgender and those things? If you are saying that…
(Laughing)
P1: How did you end up with transgender?
(laughing)
P4: No, he didn't talk about that.
P3: So you think that everyone has the right to be whatever he wants?
P1: No, no, no. I can tell them what he means. He means that human beings will born like an empty vase.
P5: So he can choose whatever he wants, so a woman can grow up as a man and vice versa?
(Shocked)
P2: No! That's not what he's talking about

P4: Since you said that we are born like an empty paper, and we acquire our behavior and our way of thinking from the environment, so in this way we can't choose between a woman or a man. Did you get it?
P5: Yes, I got it. I will explain it in Arabic.
P4: Okay, go ahead.
P5: المرأة و الرجل كي يولدو اول مرة, their mind is empty, if we get this mind and fill it…
P2: that's a philosophical study we dealt with in…
P5: It's not philosophical, it's complete logic, anyway, if we fill this mi d with logic and we will not give it any type of emotional information.
P2: That's impossible.
P4: No, no, it's possible. He's right.
P2: You love your mom, you love your dad, you love your brother. How is that logic?
P5: She brought a good point. When you said your mother and father, you'll understand that there's nothing called love, it's all about benefits, your father and mother are souls and they have a mission, you have also a mission
P2: but you can't convince that to a one year old!
P5: In your life there is a different type of mission, like I said, كي تكوني صغيرة عندك مهمة، كي تكبري شوي تكون عندك مهمة، و تكوني عجوز تكون عندك مهمة، كل عمر عندو مهمة
P2: yeah, yeah, I got you
P5: Your father and your mother are the same, like you. When your father decides to marry, it's his own choice. He has his own mission, to be an individual person. You too have a mission,
P3: يعني كاين الmain mission كاين وside quest
(All the group laughing)
P7: Ok, Ok, I have a question, you said that everything is about logic, so when are we gonna realize that? When I'm still a kid or at four years old, or six years old? I don't know what is logical, what is emotional. The only thing that I know is that this is my father, this is my mom, and I love them. This is my brother, this is my sister.
P5: How do you know that you are in a mission?
P7: I wanted to ask about the age too. What age do we know?
P2: That could happen maybe in the puberty age.
P5: Yes, like I said, your father and mother have individual missions. And you have a mission. So when you grow up, your father and your mother will tell you about your mission. Will explain the mission.
P1: Is life a game for you, missions and side quests, or what?
P2: Yeah, that's what he's saying.
P3: he's connecting unrelated points. Do you believe in God and his messengers?
P5: bro, you bring weird topics
(P1 and P2 laughing)
P2: هيا الحمد لله طمنت عليك
(laughing)
P3: You have to re-think what you're talking about.
P7: Yeah, you have to overlook again, like, you have to…
P5: I did, I did overlook it three times
P2: This is the problem. This is how you always respond. Yeah.
P1: We're not here to question you. Logic means one plus one equals two. You're saying that we don't have emotions, we don't have… I don't know, what are we?
P3: For example, what is soul?
P5: Yes, I will tell you what is soul
P2: You don't know what is soul, no one know what is soul

P5: النفس و لا الروح؟
P2: الروح، اما حتى النفسis a subjective thing منقدروش نحكو فيها، اي كيما اك الكتاب لي قريناه في الفلسفة تاع الأنا و الآخر
P4: ah, I got your point, I think I know what you're talking about. الأناis ego in English. And the self, like, there is self-confidence and there is ego
P5: do you know how do I get my ideas?
P2: Yes, yes, please tell us
P1: I don't know how do you get your thoughts, but let me tell you this, I really want to know how, because you have some weird, interesting thoughts.
P5: Do you want to get the same thoughts, or…
P1: No, no, no, just tell us how
(laughing)
I'm just interested in what you think.
P5: So, in this life, when you get through some experiences, some, like, specific kind of experiences, you will get the same logic. And actually, some people start getting it, but I don't know why…
P2: What kind of experiences?
P1: Yes, what kind of experiences?
P3: What's logic for you?
P5: logic for me is a truth even if you deny it it's still there, it's still correct… that's my logic
P2: that's your logic, there's a difference between your logic and logic
P5: For example, you say, for example, from your experience and your thought, you say, no, I will not believe that truth but it's the truth, even if you don't believe it. You can't find some type of evidence to deny facts, even if you say, I will not believe this, it will stay true.
P1: Wow! Explain that more, I didn't get you. (Confused)
P2: I think there is a difference between your logic and logic.
P5: It's not my logic.
P2: Yes, there is a difference here. Like when you said your logic, that means your own thoughts, which like you acquired from maybe your experiences, maybe from the others' experiences, maybe from books, but when you say logic, for example… It's not true.
P5: I have my thoughts from the experiences but these thoughts, I didn't get it from experiences.
P2: How can I rely about something that you created? Okay, convince me at least, so I can understand you.
P4: But logic can differ from one to another, like what he created. How you rely about something I created.
P2: You're going to answer me now. How do you rely on something I created or the other person created?
P5: No, no, it's about what you created. If I gave you my thought, there will be evidences, even if you try to see it from our perspective, you will not be able to deny it.
P2: Ok, convince me that the mindset of man is the same of the mindset of the woman.
P2: No, convince me.
P5: I gave you an example.
P2: This is not, this is not… those are examples, not reasons.
P1: Give us an example. Examples we cannot consider them as reasons.
P2: We cannot call it a mindset. We studied that. You claim that our mindsets are equal, but you didn't give us an example.
P5: I didn't say that the minds are equal, that's not what I meant. I said that human brain are born the same, and that humans choose what they want
P1: Example

P5: For example, when I told you about my opinion in the logical process about the family, before months ago, you chose not to believe me because you already have your own process. But my opinion is not from my process. This is not my process. I didn't live in a logical process. I created the process because I saw the logic in it. It was not just me.
P1: How did you create your old logic? And the new one, how did you get it?
P2: Yes, from where did you create it? What makes it reliable? What makes it, like, valuable? What makes it reliable?
P5: The thing that makes it reliable, that makes it valid, is that until now no one has been able to deny me, no one has been able to give me evidence.
P1: That's your problem, you believe this, so you're not going to admit it. And we did, we did (laughing)
P5: I'm not going to deny my logic
P2: Because you believe in this, you're not going to accept anything from the outside.
P5: I didn't talk about the physical difference between men and women, physical. I spoke about mental.
P2: Mental? What does affect mental? What does affect your mentality?
P5: For example, if we put a man in a cave…
P2: That's an experiences, how we treat each other, how we love the people around us, the environment
P2: No, you can't deny it. That's an experience this is not an evidence.
P1: Before, when we talked about the mindset, when you gave me your opinion…
P5: I gave you logic, not opinion
P1: then no, it's not logic, with all my respect, with all my respect, this is not logic
P5: Ok, so I gave you my opinion
P1: yeah, you gave me your opinion, then I criticized you, for me, it's irreasonable
P5: What did you say? You spoke about emotions
P2: I forget what I said
(P1 laughing)
P1: both of you are lost
(Laughing)
P5: No, you said…
P1: Do you want to change the topic? Let's change the topic. What do you think their dissertation is about? I think it's about sarcasm
(Head shake means no)
P2: ah, fluency? (Excited)
(Head shake, means no)
P5: I think it has to do with behavior
(Nod, means yes)
P4: ah, I think I got it right (happy)
P1: guys, guys, another question, what do you think Zeki is writing in that paper
(Laughing)
P2: I think he's writing the way we speak
P4: he's just an observer
(Laughing)
P2: is it about body gestures? Is it about gestures?
(Head shake, means no)
P5: is it how about we express ourselves?
P3: is it about how we break the ice between us? When we don't know each other?
P2: what about you, P1
P1: I have no idea

(Laughing)
P2: anyway, why is P2 sitting in the floor? قاعدة قعدة تع عزوز
(All the group laughing)
P2: اني دايخة متلومش عليا
(Laughing)
P2: Anyway, P5, if we didn't agree with you, this doesn't mean we didn't understand you
P3: Yeah, I know, it's a group discussion

Group Two Session

P1: The quiz was yesterday (Academic Writing quiz)
P2: It was yesterday
P3: Yes, it was. It was easy for me
P1: There was a lot of cheating, a lot, especially… it was only arguments
(laughing)
P2: It was an exam. Actually... I cheated in all the quizzes (sarcastic)
P4: There was a lot of information
P1: تع العام لي فات homeworkاييه حقا، و لا اك ال
P4 (confused): Bro, I was so lost during that presentation. Nothing made sense.
P2 (laughing): Same. I told you we should've brought Red Bull and just enjoy the mess.
P1: I swear that homework was driving me crazy. I felt like we'd never finish it on time.
P2 (laughing): I told you we could just submit it with a note saying "FINALLY!"
P3: yeah, I remember it, there was a lot of information
P1: anyway, the quiz was two tables, one answer and justification and…
P4: honestly, I like how she defined the terms: husty, generalizations…, she defined them so I wrote them in the draft, it was helpful (impressed)
P1: I actually struggled in the justification, like why? We give… like I prefer just answer and there's no justification (laughing)
P4: The justification actually exists in the definition itself.
P3: what do you mean you struggled? I gave you everything
(P1 and P4 laughing)
P1: That's why I struggled
I don't like this
P2: I didn't get any word you said because I have no idea (Sarcastic)
P1: Because he cheated from ChatGPT
P3: do you even know what was the quiz about?
(all the group laughing)
P2: I forgot about it
P4: actually it was her easiest, so far
P2: because you revised and…
P4: no, because it was easy
P1: she gave them the definitions, that's why
P3: it was easier than the one…
P2: I was busy cheating aaahhh
(all the group laughing)
P1: she was busy telling us the definitions and in the meantime, we took the advantage of cheating
(laughing)
P4: that's perfect (laughing)
P3: I used ChatGPT (Sarcastic)
P4: she was in my face, I couldn't
P1: it wasn't the cheating itself, it was the fun of it

P2: the flavor
P3: so fun
(P2 and P3 laughing)
P1: yeah, it was so fun, we were at the back, we were cheating, we were waiting for, how do you mean… الخباشين
P4: I'm so anxious, I can't have fun
P2: You're anxious so you can't cheat?
P4: Yeah
(laughing)
P2: in studying or even in life
P3: nerds
P1: nerds, yes. We were waiting for the nerds to…
P4: I don't get
P3: we started asking nerds to…
P1: aha, aha, to go to the front to full fill the table so that we stay in the back and we…
(laughing)
P2: خباشين the scribers
(laughing)
P1: nerds
P2: literal translation… Heh, what else?
P3: other quizzes
P4: I like miss *** quiz
P2: Yeah, me too
P3: Yeah, me too
P1: I forgot!
P5: we did well in her quiz
P1: yes, miss *** QCM
P2: because it was easy and easy to cheat
(Sarcastic, laughing)
P1: easy peasy, lemon squeezy
P2: because ChatGPT will give you the direct answers
(laughing)
P1: you even cheated in *** quiz?
P2: Yeah
P3: we all did (Sarcastic)
P1: you switch off your brain
(P1, P2 and P3 laughing)
P2: ChatGPT is making us stupid
P5: we can't make anything without ChatGPT
P3: it making life easier without thinking
P1: we became passive, actually. For me, for me I don't even bother myself to like go and make such a hard work anymore
P3: that's dangerous
P1: that's dangerous, like nowadays in corner sheets are in front of us and we're looking for a summary
(Laughing)
P3: yeah
P1: he said I gave you the corner sheet, I said give me something else…
(laughing)

P2: we became addicted to reels, to scroll, I challenge you if you watch a one hour or ten minutes YouTube video
P1 and P3: you can't
P2: you'll use ChatGPT to resume it
P1: even movies, we even skip 10 seconds, 10 second
P4: I don't do that,
P1: I do
P4: I'm into details, I can't skip
P1: I get bored
P3: there's a difference between a YouTube video than a movie or an episode of a series
P2: I always skip the dialogs until the action comes
P4: I hate watching stuff with people do this
P3: even in games, you just skip the dialogs
P2: you hate what?
P4: watching like movies, I have a friend who likes to skip, I can't
P2: yeah, because, its like…
P1: even ads! (Surprised)
P4: you can skip the actual scenes
P3 addressing P2: do you also skip when a dialog comes in the game
P2: yeah
(laughing)
P3: all the time
(laughing)
P2: no, no, if the game was so exciting and the story, is the game related to the story, yeah
P1: I think there's one situation when we can't skip anymore in this time
P3: what?
P1: books
P2: books? What is a book?
(all the group laughing)
P2 and P3: what is a book
P1: we can't skip, like we have to read everything
P3: Harry Potter
P2: never read one in my life, and that's disgusting
P1: we can't skip, like we have to read everywhere
P3: what about the one you bought? That Tunisian from the library
(P2 and P3 laughing)
P2: Yes, that's the great of the show
P1: to make an Instagram story and that's it
(laughing)
P2: ah no, I'm not that pick me guy, I hate that cringy stuff
P4: what cringy stuff?
P2: posting "Oh, I'm reading a book" in my story
P3: and a cup of coffee
P1: are you criticizing me? Come on (laughing)
P2: Yeah
P1: you're criticizing me I think
P2: posting daily… colors,
P1: no need for your perspective (Sarcastic)
P2: it's a perspective from one another
P4: well, if you're not reading it, and you're just posting it would be…

P3: that's a pick me!
P4: but if you're actually reading it and enjoying it
P1: and enjoying it, yes
P4: for me, if I enjoy a book, I tell everyone about it
P1: same
P4: like, go read that book, it's amazing
P3: It's different form what he says, he says like, you're putting someone is their shoes, like go read this book and it's good, you're showing yourself, it's a flex
P1: ah, you were reading
P2: it's not a flex, it's gives you that small dose of dopamine, like you did something you didn't (he means that he did not actually read the book) and show people that you did
P4: if you did
P3: It's a kind of flex, you're flexing at this point
P4: what if you actually read it?
P2: if I actually read it, I'll post it in my story, and people will believe I actually read it, I will get replies "oh, he's a nerd" and get replies with emojies
P4: and honestly, reading books is not about telling people, maybe once in a while you can share that book but you should actually enjoy it by yourself, this is the good side of it
P1: yes, I like reviews more, like when I read a book, I have to post it
P2: yeah, me too
P3: yeah, some reviews are good, especially when it comes to theories
P2: like dopamine and caffeine
P1: make a review, like this book talked about this and that, I liked this and that, I got a lesson from this and that…
P3: especially when there are theories of this book and actions that happened
P2: actually, I can watch a two hours documentary
P3: me too
P3: I can, there's a channel, of course you know him, if you don't then you're living under a rock, (Sarcastic) it's called " "الدحيح
P1and P4: yes, I know him
P3 to P5: do you know him or are you living under a rock? It's so good
P2: Don't ask him, he's still living in 2012
(laughing)
P5: I'm preserving history, thank you.
(Sarcastic)
P4: I can't watch it خاطر يتحرك ياسر علاه؟
P3: ?يتحركAh, so you don't care about the information? The value he gives?
P4: he is sarcastic, I can watch him for hours
P1: he gives excitement, he gives excitement
P2: no, that's a technique
P3: it helps with the sketch technique
P4: for ADHD
P3: It's like he moves too much but there are two camera angles, so it seems like he's moving a lot
P2: it helps with the attention
P3: it keeps your attention
P4: yes
P2: like, speaking one hour to a direct camera is not like split angels
P3: not like someone who's sitting in the same place saying…
P2: he's famous for having an angle right here, and he turns like this and keeps…

P3: it is a thing to attract viewers
P2: yeah, it has to do with Zeki's field of…
P1: study
P2: work
P3: yeah, photography
P2: study?
P1: I used to hear that word a lot
(laughing)
P2: field of study?
P1: yeah
P2: Where?
P1: our study, I mean
P2: Dr. ***
P1: if you know you know
(laughing)
P3: هيه، وين كنا؟ مالا لباس
(all the group laughing)
P2: كاش جديد؟
(laughing)
P1: do we have something next week?
P3: الجو باهي اليوم
(all the group laughing)
P2: huh? Do we have something next week?
P1: seriouslyوالله
P3: next week? We have nothing
P2: le final
(laughing)
P1: academically speaking
P2: aha, le final next week
P3: we finished all the quizzes, بقت غير الامتحانات
P2: beinهيه، هيا
P1: I think we're free next week
P2 to p5: he gets back to work next week, cause he took like, he took a professional vacation just to study
P5: wasted his time here
P3: and then wasted time
(P3 and P5 laughing)
P1: that's a waste of time
(laughing)
P2: he wasted 30 days of his career
(all the group laughing)
P1: if even you were paid for studying (laughing)
P2: yeah, he gets paid
(all the group laughing)
P2: هيه، مالا لباس، الحمد لله، وش اخر...
P1: I'm enjoying this discussion actually, I like… I like the discussion, I'm enjoying it
P2: yeah, yeah
P3: me too
P1: والله
P2: I like the discussion, mmm (mocking p1)

(P1 and P2 laughing)
P2: هيا تراه P6
P1: P6, you didn't talk
P6: I like to listen more than talking
P4: why are you here?
(laughing)
P2: aaah, we have a listener
P1: she's an auditory person
P3: good question, P4
(laughing)
(P3 and P4 laughing)
(all the group laughing because of the awkward silent moment)
P3 and P2 addressing P6: say anything, don't be shy, say anything… sing
(laughing)
P6: P2 ...اصلا يستفزني، نولي
(Laughing)
P1: وش تولي؟
(Laughing)
P2: نوليلك عمري انايا
(a Ray song lyrics)
(P2 and P6 laughin)
P2: sorry, كملوا ايا
(P1 laughing)
P6: نولي introvert, in front of other people, malgré نعرفكم الكل, بصح كل واحد وحدو نولي عادي
P1: she's a shy person, she's a shy person
P2: You're an introvert?
P6: yes, yes
(laughing)
P3: you don't talk like that
P6: yes, yes I know
P2: little bit shy
P6: كل واحد وحدو نولي normal
P1: she's an auditory person, she likes to listen
P3: when it comes to the group, she's a bit nervous
P6: yes
P2: but when you listen you have to respond at least
(Laughing)
P6: I like to analyze
P2: to give your opinion. Ah you like to analyze, huh, mmm (Sarcastic)
P6: I'm doing their job, مبعد نعطيك ال conclusion
(laughing)
(all the group laughing)
P3: تو نسقسي ChatGPT يقلي وش كنا نهدرو
(laughing)
P2 addressing P5: هيا، تناول اطراف الحديث, I'll give you a spoon
(all the group laughing)
P1 to P6: الفيديو تاع امس
(P1 and P6 laughing)
P3: انا نعطيك مغرف، وشي هوما اطراف الحديث؟
(all the group laughing)

P2:) ينشطاو talking about the energy drink)
P1: I hate it
P2: you hate it? Because your president closed off the commercial economy, so Red Bull is not available anymore
P1: so this is the alternative?
P2: this is the local alternative
P3: the alternative of the alternative of the alternative
(Laughing)
P1: I even think it kills the…
P6: the legal local alternative
(laughing)
P2: the legal substitution of Red Bull
P1: it looks like…
P2: do you know what's in there? What are the components?
P1: like wine
P6: wine, but it's cute
(laughing)
(P1 and P6 laughing)
P2: no, it's written
P3: just an energy drink
P2: it's written right here, as big as your head (sarcasm) energy drink
(laughing)
P2: it contains sugar and water and caffeine
P1: تصلحyou make advertisements
P2: really?
P1: Um
P2: huh, it's easy (Sarcastic)
P3: sell her the bottle since it's easy
P1: you have that sense of marketing
P3: try to sell her the product
P2: Ok, I'll try to sell you the product (the energy drink)
P1: yes, convince me
P2: Ok
P1: I hate it, Ok?
P2: do you feel tired all the time? You feel lazy all the time? You feel like you don't have energy all the time?
P2: you want to read more book?
(All the group laughing)
P1: yeah
(laughing)
P4: she wakes up at 6 o'clock without a reason in the summer! (Astonished)
P2: ah!?
P4: do you think this one doesn't feel anything? She wakes up at 6 o'clock in the summer! (Astonished)
P2: you can get tired because of that!
P1: I'm energetic
P2: what do you do when you wake up at 6 o'clock in the summer (last two words were P4's tone mockery, sarcastic)
(laughing)
P1: many things!

P2: many things?
P1: yes, I start my day with journal, you know what journal is?
P2: journal? Ah, like in my day… ahh
P1: it's not, it's not, ahh…
P3: that stuff
P1: like I started my Friday… no
P2: it's so journal
(laughing)
P2: it's been a while. After the journal, you take a bath?
P1: I have my time at the breakfast (laughing)
P3: what do you eat for breakfast?
P1: I…
P3: eggs?
(P1 laughing)
P1: many things
P3: many things?
P1: I wake up hungry
P2: you don't look like you eat many things
P1: Because نحرق
P2: ah, you mean you burn calories
P1: yes
P2: what do you do to burn calories?
P1: my body is… like body is created like this
P2: so, you wanna say it's genetic?
P1: yes, actually in our family, like we have genetics of being fit, even at the…
P2: don't you ever marry a *** person
P4: it's called fast metabolism
P1: wait, even when a woman in our family, gets…
P2: what's your family name again?
P1: ***
P2: don't you ever marry a ***, again
(P1 and P4 laughing)
P3: skinny girl (laughing)
P1: why? (laughing)
P2: it's not about being skinny…
P3: Cheb Bello
(laughing)
P1: how to say it? We still young all the time
P2: ha? They stay young all the time?
P1: Yes
P2: so, you wanna stay young all the time?
(All the group laughing)
P1: Yes
(laughing)
P3: this energy drink is good for you
P2: but if you took too much, you're gonna destroy your body
P1: for some reason, I don't think it's healthy, I don't know
P3: yeah, a lot of sugar if you take too much
P2: it's not a lot of sugar, it's prohibited for minor people
P1: you couldn't convince me, so you couldn't make a deal

P2: because it makes your heart beat up. There's an irony, do you think that people who drink this and caffeine all the day, have nothing to do? They drink energy drinks to do nothing?
P4: it's like a trend, شافك قاعد تشرب حاب حتى هو يشرب
P1: yes, it like Coca بكري
P4: Have you guys tried the pink soda? And coffee? A lot of people have tried it (exited)
P1: déjà coffee I hate it
P2: déjà energy drink…
P4: like to revise at night like ,ليلة الرعدa lot of people posted themselves like drinking literally coffee
P3: that's the pick me
P2: trust me the caffeine works no more, so they switched to Vodka instead
(all the group laughing)
P2: because caffeine doesn't work anymore, especially with miss *** quiz
P4: *** ميس معyes
(P2 and P4 laughing)
P1: still ChatGPT make the work for you (Sarcastic)
P2: that's reality
P3: that's another thing
P2: she roasted me bro
(P1 laughing)
P2: I drink a lot of this (the energy drink) and ChatGPT does the things for me
P1: uhm
(laughing)
P3: yeah, you drink energy drinks to stay awake
P1: let me ask you, if they make ChatGPT as a robot, he moves… would you buy it? Like it's accessible in our country and everything, do you buy it? To make your room, to make food?
P2: depends on the gender
(laughing)
(all the group laughing)
P2: specify please
(laughing)
P1: come on
(laughing)
P2: and the age and all of that
P4: wait, there's a movie
P1: as a first step, they don't make the robot like specified
P3: neutral
P3: you can make them as your slave, for example
P2: it does everything for you
P1: would you buy it to make your bed for you, to cook for you, to do the assignments, to clean the house
P4: yes, if he lives alone, I think
P2: there's a theory that if you… how to say it, if you make AI for example AI sends in a form of a human being, it, let's say it, and not to personalize it. It already developed emotions emotions and that's something scary
P1: really? (Astonished)
P2: watch "Automatated" movie, it's about how robots return
P3: some robots develop emotions
P2: they rebellion against the human being and they killed them all, only few people survived
P1: but that's a movie, but did they do it actually?

P2: there's a video, it's trendy right here, it's like a robot, he's not supported by anything, ChatGPT or something like that, he's intelligent, I give you that, but he did something Is not expectable, he, like, how to say it, for example I'm controlling Zeki by a program, he over came that program and started to control himself!
P1: ahh, yeah
P3: he has his own free will
P2: his own free will
P1: do you have…
P2: do you know what does it mean free will (serious)
P1: yes
P3: in some cases, it happens
P1: do we have this kind of robots in our country?
P2: our country? (Sarcastic)
P3: It happens, ChatGPT
P1: in reality!
P3: هيه نحكو على الreality
P1: in reality!
P3: it happens in reality, ChatGPT, it copied itself, someone tried to delete it and it copied itself so many times, it made copies of himself
P1: imagine how life is gonna be in 2030!
P3: yeah, to not be deleted
P2: not in Algeria, in Algeria it's same
P3: It's started also to control itself
P1: it's scary
P2: it's the same in Algeria
P4: fixed
P2: in Japan maybe things will get worse
P3: a lot worse
P2: because Japan is (he raised his hands to express that Japan is the highest)
P1: another climate
P3: Algeria still working with الورقةand paper
P2: because Japan is highly… how to say it, required the basis on robots, they build everything with robots, the cars, the building, the cars…
P3: even doctors to do surgeries
P2: which is something crazy
P1: I saw a video of someone who was in the supermarket and he paid everything he bought with his phone
P3: it happened in Japan
P2: ah, did you see the last chip of Ellen Musk which turns people with disabilities to control things with their minds (impressed)
P3: yeah, with their minds, people who were paralyzed
P2: yeah, with his hands crossed and only controls his mind
P3: Dr. X
(laughing)
P2: do you know that virtual reality thing that you wear them and you become in another world, like you switched in the brain, like a chip, biological chip
P3: instructed in the neural system
P2: yeah, in your neural system, in your brain, in general, and you see everything like in numbers, and everything is advanced, have you ever seen a game called "syber park?"
P4: yeah

P3: you've seen how its developed and the technology
P1: actually, a quote says…
P3: I finished it like two times
P1: it said that like our brain have that ability like to lift a Mercedes if they want to
P3: that's neural…
P1: yes, we have the ability but our brain believes that we can't
P2: also Michael Jordan, yeah, that's what Michael Jordan said in the interview before he passed away, he said that tiredness is only related to the mind
P1: yeah
P2: you body will never get tired, that tired is a feeling that you brain feels
P3: It's only your mind that limits you from doing things
P1: if we invest in our brain, I think it's gonna be another level
P2: than start you investment
P1: why don't you do it? Because ChatGPT is doing…
(Laughing)
P2: Because ChatGPT is doing it for me, so I'm ahead of you two steps at least
(laughing)
P3: two steps ahead?
P2: two steps ahead, yeah, at least (Sarcastic)
P1: at least we're talking about the brain, something we have, what are you talking about?
P2: I'm talking about something I have (self-enhancing humor)
(P1 laughing)
P2 addressing P6: اني نستنا فيك تهدري
(laughing)
(P 1 and P2 laughing)
P2: شاركينا شوي اطراف الحديث، نفوتلك الريزو تاع بكري، ايا تره، وش يعني...اه؟ ChatGPT ,لقطةuse that vocal cords
P1: what do you do for your eyes and eyebrows to become that beautiful?
P2: what do you do? What do you do in your free time?
P6: عراحتلي، تلفتلي ’est bon
(laughing)
(P1 and P6 laughing)
P2: P6, what do you do in your free time?
P6: actually, I don't have a free time, especially these days والله
(P1 laughing)
P3: why not?
P6: because I have responsibilities at home
P2: cleaning and washing
P1: she has little brothers and sisters
P6: I have two
P2: ah, that's cute, yeah, me too (Sarcastic)
(P1 laughing)
P6: مع ال cornel sheet تاع *** ماشي الوقت خلاص
(laughing)
P2: شووو؟
P6: معنديش الوقت خلاص، مبعد طيشتهم في الزباله
(Laughing)
P1: yeah! She didn't even take them with her, that's the thing that killed me
P6: I knew it's over when I saw the first question, يا ربي راو لي ماقريتوش بذات هو لي جا لول
(Laughing)

P2: yeah, skip *** cornel sheet, what do you do in your free time in general?
P6: I used to work in a… beauty salon
P2: that's clearly on you, yeah, it's so perfect (talking about P6's eyebrows) yeah,
P6: نبان حفافة؟
(Laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P2: يا الحفافة
(laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P2: I'm not familiar with these things, but as she said (meaning P1) your eyebrows are…
P1: are so clean
P2: بالميلي مترdo you do them yourself?
(laughing)
P6: اذاكا هو زدت توحشت الsalon
(Laughing)
P1: what do you do for your eyebrows?
P6: I do nothing, واللهI do nothing
(Laughing)
P1: so you brush them and that's it?
P6: yeah
P1: yeah, good
P2: so you literally brush?
P6: yes
(laughing)
P1: yeah, I do brush my eyebrows
P2: it's so clear, right here (pointing at P6's eyebrows). So? What do you do in your free time? You didn't answer me
P6: I told you, I used to work I a beauty salon
P2: that's not a free…
P6: it's my free time
P2: aaah, so you work in your free time
P6: yes!
P2: هيييه فهمت
(Laughing)
P1: و في الbusy time, what do you do?
(laughing)
P2: في الbusy time
(laughing)
(P1 and P2 laughing)
P6: babysitting, babysitting و نكافح في الجامعة يعني
P1: do you have any hobbies? Any talent
P6: no
P2: in brushing eyebrows
(P6 laughing)
P2: so what's up with…
P6: عند ربي
P2: I have a birthmark right here (pointing at his thigh)
P6: you told me
P2: I told you, ah? That's… (Sarcastic, laughing)
(All the group laughing)

P1: you're close
(laughing)
P2: when? When? We're not that close, we're enemies, she blocked me and I blocked her, so it ended right there, we could've ended more, like you know
(Laughing)
P1: الله غالب
P6: you started that, I told you that making… (laughing)
P2: اهيه؟
(P1 and P6 laughing)
P6: making "seen" is disrespectful
P2: leaving you on "seen" doesn't mean that I…
P6: yes!
P2: doesn't mean that I hate you or ignoring you
P6: I know, but it disrespectful
P1: was it on the morning or on the night?
P2: باهي جت الopportunity باهي، باش نحلو الخلافات لي بيناتنا, you know
(P6 laughing)
P2: when I leave you on seen, it doesn't mean…
P6: I know, but it's disrespectful for me, اني حقرتك
P2: you said you know, you know that I'm… I'm always…
P3: busy
(P1, P2 and P6 laughing)
P2: I'm always outside هاملas my father said to me yesterday
P6: I don't know you enough to know that
P2: trust me, you can know me
P1: you didn't give him the opportunity
(laughing)
P6: I don't want to
P2: actually, I didn't, no… it's not about I didn't give her the opportunity, I didn't give myself the opportunity for her to know me, so, what do we name our children
(All the group laughing)
P1: او يشرلك
(Laughing)
P2: صاحبي P7هاه، شفتي انا كيفاه هدرتها؟. ايا ندورو شويا،
(All the group laughing)
P2: اشرب شوي منشط
(P5 disagreed)
P2: تو نجيب لصاحبي مبعد قرعة خضرا معمرة
P6: لا إله إلا الله
(P1, P2 and P6 laughing)
P3: قرعةisis
P2: قرعةisis الخضرا وش بيكم أولادي
So? How is the work going?
(Laughing)
P3: how the vacation is going
P2: no, he took the vacation, and it's supposed that your team workers, your colleagues have done the work for you?
P5: guess what? They left everything as I left it (disappointed)
P2: when he goes back to work, he'll find that everything remains the same before a month of his vacation

P5: a lot of fight to do with
P2: talk about work, P5
P5: secret
(laughing)
P3: it's a secret
P2: aaahhh, it's a secret
P3: confidential information
(laughing)
P1 took her phone to take a video with her friend P6
P2: do you wanna take a picture?
P1: a video
P2: do with this, it's better (giving her his IPhone)
P6: IPhone is better
P6: على الاقل يبان غير وجهي و وجهك
(P1 and P6 laughing)
P2 addressing P6: و كيفاه راح نبعثهولك مبعد؟ تسما راح نديبلوكيك و ديبلوكيني
P6: ابعث لP1 و تبعث هولي P1
(laughing)
P2: شووو
P1: راح نبلوكيه انا العشية
(laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P2: I'm here to make friends, ahh
(Laughing)
P3: I have your back
(laughing)
P1: ah, by the way, P2, can I know why did you laugh at my Instagram story?
P2: Which one? I laughed at a lot of your stories
(laughing)
P1: The one about Harry Potter book
P2: Because it's cringe
(sarcastically)
P1: What do you mean? So many people liked it, why it always has to be you?
P2: Exactly, I did it on purpose, cause I know that girls want to be liked, and girls always like each other's stories
(sarcastically)
P1: hmm, so you want to impress me
P2: no, no, wait, not to impress you! Who are you to impress? Come on. Wait let's…
P1: I'm *** (saying her name)
P2: let's settle this… yeah, I know that's you're *** (mocking her tone), and never marry a *** (her family name) person
(P1 laughing)
P2: girls in their stories get a lot of compliments
P1: hum, true, I got compliments in real life, not just…
P2: because you posted it, if you didn't post it in your Instagram no one will know you're drawing
P1: no, they did
P2: you posted in the group, we knew from the group discussion
P1: I'm not talking about you and your friends, I'm talking about previous years
P2: ah, previous years? That's why it's so shitty (nonchalant, sarcastic)

P1: let me show you the pictures, it's really so good and he's making fun of it
P2: هيا، time is up
P1: توالها ب P5 حتى نجي
(Laughing)
P2: حبيبي، جاري P5
(Laughing)
(P1 and p2 laughing)
P6: P5, did you regret having this vacation from your work to study?
P5: it takes a lot to do that
P1: what do you do for work?
P2: he's a policeman
(P2 and P5 laughing)
(P1 showing her drawing)
(All the group laughing at the drawing)
P2: it looks like Mbappe
(laughing)
P3: Mbappe طلع لمصر اولدي
(laughing)
P1: Ok, critique me, what should I change?
P3: ah, the cheek
P1: والله، be professional
P2: actually I'm…
P5: you have to support her
P3: you have the eyes, too
P2: he's black, why did you make him white?
(laughing)
P1: P2, we're gonna meet outside (threatening him, laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P3: what you gonna do?
P2: نشكي بيه عندك
(All the group laughing)
Group 3 Session
P1: can we ask ChatGPT to generate the topic?
(laughing)
P2 addressing P3: I think you've got 7 in the *** TD
P4: ياسر فيك 7
(All the group laughing)
P4: I've got 0.25! I'm so glad of her majesty that she gave me 0.25
(All the group laughing)
P2: how can I have 3 as a participation mark and 1 in the attendance?
(sarcastically)
(P1 and p 4 laughing)
P2: you participated everything in one session
(laughing)
P6: Ok, to another topic, please
(laughing)
P2: let's start asking different questions about different topics
P4: good idea!
P3: so, let's talk about our groups, what do you like and dislike about both of them?
P8: I don't like both groups

(all the group laughing)
P5: P2 جابها من لخر
(laughing)
(P2, P5 and P3 laughing)
P3: we don't like you either
(Laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P2: that's a mutual feeling (mocking P3's tone)
P3: but we gotta be a team! We're in the same group
P7: we're enemies between each others, not between the groups
P2: I think you have a negative vibe in your group, I don't know why
P3: we feel the same for you
P1: no, we have the vibe of كوكب زمردةin our group
(All the group laughing)
P9: cause, most of us are girls, we have only two boys
P1: that's why I changed the group in the first place
(Laughing)
(P4 and P6 laughing)
P2: خليتيني وحدي
(Faking sadness)
P1: الله غالب عليك صاحبي
(bluntly) (laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P3: did you noticed that most of the teachers talk about our group, cause we have good interactions in mostly all the modules, because we're friendly in the first place
P2: Ok, I have a question, what is fun for you, guys?
P3: It's a feeling, subjective feeling that encourages the dopamine to be produced, to make you live that sense of joy. It may be lived through scrolling, that's the easy way, or through the hard way which is doing something hard, like to actually make efforts
P1: like what?
P3: like training
P5 addressing P3: so, what's fun for you?
P3: for me, fun is scrolling through social media, do your hobbies, exchange ideas with people you love
P2: personally, I don't consider scrolling as fun at all, I like to watch a full movie rather than watch a two minutes TikTok video or ten minutes YouTube video
P2: OMG, I'm the quite opposite
(laughing)
P11: if you take too much dopamine form one source, you'll be addicted to that source
P2: why?
P3: because you'll get used to it, and it won't impress you like the first time
P6: yeah, like when you scroll, you'll have that feelings mixture, something is funny, something's sad, something's is encouraging…
P8: this can actually destroy your mind
P5: yeah, cause the brain always needs more, and that's dangerous
P2: heh, so what's fun again?
P11: و الله
(laughing)
P3: you can detect when someone is funny when his name starts with A (he means his name)
(laughing)

P4: there are people who are just funny, they open their mouth and you laugh with them (laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P2: for me, I can consider someone as funny, the others can consider him silly, like someone we know (looking at P4)
(P2 and P4 laughing)
P8: bullying has never been funny for me
P2: yeah, bullying is not included
P2 whispering to P1: look, I'm gonna bully P3
P1 addressing P3: I mean your socks looks pretty good
P3: socks?
P5 addressing P2: if your bullying P3's socks, you have to see your shoes
(All the group laughing)
P10: yeah, like that one TikToker who pronounce all brands in a wrong way (laughing)
P2: ah, yes, I know him, he says Puma as Numa, Jordan as Jorban
(laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P1: so, last time me and P2 had a conversation and he misunderstood me, I noticed that in him
P2: really?
P1: yeah
P2: I misunderstood what?
P1: the speech of the others
P3: no, no it's not about he misunderstands, he use his understanding to make jokes
P2: do you know how much power you need to have this skill?
(laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P9: I have a question, who is the creator you find most funny for you?
P1: my brother
(laughing)
(P1 and P4 laughing)
P3: me! I became verified
(laughter)
(All the group laughing)
P5: how did you do that, by the way (laughing)
P2: yeah, I got it for free, it's for one year. Mark loves me (
laughing)
P5: صدقتك
(All the group laughing)
P6 addressing p1: what?
P1 (reading the email) (annoyed): I sent a teacher an email and they responded "that's your problem, dear" how can this be my problem?
(All the group laughing)
P3: so your problem is with the word "dear"
P6: dear means الغزال
P2: ~انا و غزالي يا لالا، انا و غزالي في الجبل نلقط في النوار
(A song lyrics)
(All the group laughing)
P3: I have another question, do you hear your own voice when you send a vocal?
P7: yeah

(laughing)
P3: trust me bro, it’s the worst
(All the group laughing)
P7: I hate it so much, but I like yours, P4
P4: oh, thank you
P3: you hate it because you have an Android
(All the group laughing)
P7: yeah, or when you send a vocal and it doesn’t send, you’ll have to repeat it with the same energy
(laughing)
P8: yeah, especially if you laugh, you have to repeat that laugh even if you don’t want to
(laughing)
P2: do you guys laugh at vocals?
(laughing)
P5: yeah
(laughing)
P4 addressing P6: a podcast of laughing
(P4 and P6 laughing)
P2: I have a friend who always sends vocals, and it’s 90% spit and the 5% words are curse words and the other 5% is the message
(All the group laughing)
P2: yeah, consider everyone his homies
(laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P2 addressing P6: P6, تناول معنا اطراف الحديث، نعطيك مغرف؟
(laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P1: والله صح، you look like you’re in a bad mood
P6: better than you
P11: خير منك كي شغل
(laughing)
P3: you know, P4 has four eyes, guess where the other tow?
(laughing)
P4: where?
P2 pointing at P4’s birthmark between P4’s eyes
(laughing)
P1: اوف مقدمك
(Laughing)
P3: no, that a 3rd eye only
(All the group laughing)
P1: anyway, guys, are you happy that your career almost ended?
P2: and how do you feel like you’ll be jobless once you finish?
P8: like any other Algerian, like any other jobless Algerian
P3: اذا خفت عمت كي شغل
P8: exactly
P4: it’s fine, you’ll get married to someone who’s rich and will spoil you
P5: why is it always have to be marriage for financially independence?
P4: I’m not saying that you can’t spoil yourself by your own money, I mean that you can do that, and your man as well have to spoil you, Ok?
P4: personally, I don’t wanna work when I finish my studies

P3: you're saying that you wanna marry and be treated as a princess?
(laughing)
P4: yup, exactly
(laughing)
P2: Yeah, cause girls can't do anything by their own, they just need a man who provides for them
(sarcastically) (laughing)
(P4 looking at P2 angrily, yet ignoring the comment)
P3: anyway, how will you feel when someone tells you can't work after all these years of studying?
P4: no, he won't tell me you can't work, I, myself told myself not to work, it's not about the man, it's my own decision
P6: it's totally fine for me not to work
P2: it's fine?
P6: if he's a real man, yes, it's fine
P3: that's a real woman talking
(P6 laughing)
P2: تعرف صلاحها
(All the group laughing)
P6: yes, cause I don't want my children to grow up with a separated parents
P4: yeah, by nature, a woman is created to be spoiled, and the man should spoil her
P6: I'm so happy to be a housewife
P2 mocking P6's tone: اخلايا
(P2 and P6 laughing)
P1: the woman should not provide, it's the role of the man
P4: yeah, exactly, don't switch roles, guys
P1: a man should be masculine enough to put his woman in her femininity, متجيش في زوز feminine
P2: tell that to the feminists
(All the group laughing)
P4: I totally disagree with everyone. It's not about a man being a provider
P7: if you were born in the 16th century you were have been burned like a witch
كون جيتي في العصور الوسطى رام حرقوك زي السحرات
(All the group laughing)
P4: it's not always a man who should provide for you, you can work and provide for yourself
P2: ah, we got ourselves a strong independent woman
(Sarcastic)
(All the group laughing)
P4: no, I'm not speaking about the nature, I'm saying that you can do it yourself with or without a man
P2: when you hit your 30s without a man, you'll realize what your saying is wrong
P4: I'm not saying that she doesn't need a man
P5: when your husband buys you anything and he hits you with the شفت الحاجة هاذي و تفكرتك, then you gonna love having a man
P2: if it's from your man ثم تحسي بيها خير
P5: yup, you gonna feel his actual manhood
P1: yeah, like our fathers
P3: yeah, when you grow up with a real father, you won't have daddy issues nor trust issues nor anger issues
P6: 0 feminists

(All the group laughing)
P2: you know that “feminism” was created by men who don’t want to provide for women, they tricked them with saying that you’re capable too, and you can do it yourself… so you have to provide for yourself with no man in your life
P4: تخيلي in the first dateيقلك انا نخلص على روحي و انتي خلصي على روحك
(All the group laughing)
P2: I wanna my woman to not know what a bill is, and there are men who want a 50/50 relationship
P3: راو ماشو راجل 50/50شفتي اي واحد يقلك
P2: yeah
(laughing)
(P2 and P3 laughing)
P1: when a manيكون ماشو قادر على شقاه باش يصرف على روحو خلي يا تجيه المرا و الذري يقلك عاونيني
P2: yes, exactly, شفتي انا مرتي نقلها تحبي تخدمي اخدمي على روحك و خلي صواردك اصرفيهم على روحك
P3: هيه و انا نزيد نصرف عليك
(laughing)
P2: انتيا تتقلشي
(A ray song lyrics)
(All the group laughing)
P4: P2 has a good mindset
P2: of course, that’s a man’s mindset
(P4 laughing)
P6: that’s the standard mindset for a man, it’s not a thing to be praised about!
(P1 almost fall)
P3: كون طاحت راي دارت بق برك
P2: كون طيحي راكي ديريsmall noise cause you’re so small
(All the group laughing)
P3: كون طاحت تزعزع الأرض اولدي
P2: نميلو و منطيحوش
P3: we lean but we don’t fall
(All the group laughing)
P2: so, since Zeki and Nourhane are a girl and a boy working together, do you wanna have a different-sex partner for next year?
P5: for me, I can cooperate with both, but I’m comfortable with females more
P3: yes, you see, and now I just fixed her phone, I’m a superhero
P1: الذري تلقيهم على الاقل
(laughing)
(All the group laughing)
P4: I’m the opposite, maybe because my female friends were toxic, I’m comfortable with males more
P1: girls, I can’t work with a boy
P3: I’m fine with both, I just need a good partner
P2: same goes for me

Résumé

Cette étude examine comment l'humour fonctionne comme stratégie de politesse dans les interactions informelles entre les étudiants de Master 1 en anglais langue étrangère à l'Université Larbi Tébessi. Elle s'appuie sur la Théorie de la Politesse de Brown & Levinson (1987) ainsi que sur le Questionnaire des styles d'humour de Martin (2003), qui constituent le

fondement théorique de l'analyse des stratégies de politesse et d'humour. Elle aborde la problématique de l'usage de l'humour comme stratégie de politesse. Les deux questions principales de recherche sont : explorer les types et fonctions de l'humour, et analyser comment l'humour est utilisé stratégiquement à cette fin. Cette recherche adopte une approche qualitative via l'Analyse Conversationnelle, en étudiant des interactions spontanées collectées à partir d'enregistrements téléphoniques. L'échantillon comprend 13 étudiants en Sciences du Langage ayant participé à trois sessions (deux spécifiques à des groupes et une conjointe). Les résultats soulignent le rôle clé de l'humour dans le bon déroulement des échanges, en favorisant la politesse par le biais du rapprochement relationnel et du renforcement de l'identité de groupe.

Mots-clés : humour, stratégie de politesse, apprenants EFL, interaction informelle, analyse conversationnelle, atténuation des actes menaçants pour la face (FTAs).

الملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في كيفية عمل الفكاهة كاستراتيجية أدب في التفاعلات غير الرسمية بين طلبة السنة الأولى ماجستير في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بجامعة العربي التبسي. تستند الدراسة إلى نظرية الأدب لبراون وليفينسون (1987) واستبيان أساليب الفكاهة لمارتن (2003)، مما يوفر الأساس النظري لتحليل استراتيجيات الأدب والفكاهة. تعالج الدراسة إشكالية استخدام الفكاهة كاستراتيجية أدب، من خلال سؤالين رئيسيين: الأول يستكشف أنواع الفكاهة ووظائفها، أما الثاني فيركز على الاستخدام الاستراتيجي للفكاهة كاستراتيجية أدب. اعتمدت الدراسة نهجًا نوعيًا من خلال تحليل المحادثة لدراسة التفاعلات العفوية التي جُمعت عبر تسجيلات صوتية للمحادثات غير الرسمية. شملت العينة 13 طالبًا من تخصص علوم اللغة، شاركوا في ثلاث جلسات (اثنتان جماعيتان وواحدة مشتركة). أظهرت النتائج الدور الفعّال للفكاهة في تسهيل التفاعل، كما بينت أن الفكاهة دعمت الأدب عبر تعزيز الروابط والعلاقات داخل المجموعة، مما يسهم في فهم أعمق لوظائفها التداولية .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفكاهة، استراتيجية الأدب، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، التفاعل غير الرسمي، تحليل المحادثة، التخفيف من أفعال تهديد الوجه.