

HUMOUR COMPETENCE: CHALLENGES FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract

Humor competence encompasses the ability to comprehend, generate, and adeptly employ humor in communication, acknowledging cultural and linguistic subtleties. It is a pivotal skill in language acquisition, facilitating social integration, comprehension, and cultural immersion. Mastering humor competence enables learners to not only grasp jokes and linguistic nuances but also utilize humor as a means to convey thoughts, foster relationships, and gain insight into language and culture. Comprehending and creating humour in a second or foreign language is intrinsically challenging, even for highly proficient learners (Bell, 2007; Vega, 1990). The spontaneous conversation is characterized by its intricate structure, which includes a combination of different sorts of humour that have overlapping meanings or purposes and are indicated by both verbal and non-verbal signals. English language learners must comprehend various aspects, including grammar, vocabulary, implications, social background, and proper circumstances for humour in English speech. Nevertheless, humor in natural interaction is vital for socialization, negotiations, and even workplace success. Not many English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks and programs, however, offer systematic training in this area of pragmatics (Claire, 1984). Thus, a growing number of ESL/EFL teachers and researchers are beginning to investigate and document ways to teach humor competence in cross-cultural communication (Lucas, 2005; Rucynski, 2017; Rucynski & Prichard, 2020). Thereafter, this paper attempts to investigate the perceptions of humor language with special reference to English as a second language among graduate students of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The researcher developed a set of well-defined questionnaires and distributed them among the graduate students from various departments to have their genuine responses on humour language. Through this, the study tries to understand the theoretical underpinnings which lay the groundwork for English as a second/foreign language learner to accommodate humour competence in their respective classrooms.

Keywords: Humor Competence, Second Language Learners, Graduate Students, Linguistic, Language, Culture, Pragmatic, Cross-Cultural Communication.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching and learning of English as a second language have not witnessed smooth sailing due to diverse challenges that came in the path of its assiduous journey. However, these challenges paved the way for identifying, understanding, and improving aspects related to second language pedagogy.

The focus on the four skills of language learning – Listening, Speaking, Reading, and writing has been the prime concern of language pedagogy. Simultaneously, language teachers consider other specific competencies as essential and also care for them.

Language Competencies:

Linguistic competence is recognized as a system of rules governing an individual's understanding of the acceptability of everything in the language, which is akin to the native speakers of that language. The concept was introduced in 1965 by Noam Chomsky, who rejected Saussure's concept of 'langue' and instead introduced the system of the generative process,' which was based on a rationalist model of underlying competence.

Literary competence denotes a comprehensive mastery of understanding, analyzing, and appreciating literary works across genres like novels, poetry, drama, and essays. It involves discerning intricate elements within texts, contextualizing them historically and culturally, and engaging with diverse literary theories. Proficiency in articulating insights through writing is crucial, as well as demonstrating the ability to construct coherent arguments supported by textual evidence and scholarly perspectives. Acquiring literary competence in language learning also became a controversial issue. English language teaching has witnessed debates revolving around developing literary competence by teaching language through literature.

Production and understanding of humor again call for a specific competence. Second-language learners fail to develop this competence even when reaching native-like proficiency levels. This is because humor competence has not been considered an integral aspect of English language pedagogy.

In recent decades, however, there has been a significant interest in humor as a powerful pedagogical tool, and research revolving around the subject has risen notably. But despite all the evidence available on humor's effectiveness in diverse fields such as health, education, workplace, etc., there is still not enough research on practical implementation and methodology of its use in teaching. Ascertaining the knowledge needed to develop the ability to appreciate humor still poses a challenge to teachers and learners of English as a second language.

The various meanings associated with the word 'humor' could be discerned if one goes to trace it in its historical journey. The term humor has a long history. The semantic associations of this word have undergone considerable changes as the word itself is centuries old. Most scholars have traced the meaning of humor to its earliest usage as bodily fluids. It was only after the 16th century that it entered the realm of comics.

Among other terms that have served to act as synonyms for humor, the term 'wit' is the closest and has even come to replace humor. Peterson and Saligman are of the view that by the beginning of the 19th century, the conceptual distinction between wit and humor was complete. Wit referred to cognitive ability as hurtful, whereas humor came from the heart and was benevolent. Morreall (1983), in drawing the distinction between wit and humor opines that while wit originates in the mind of the observer, humor is something that is observed.

Theoretical Underpinning:

What is humor?

Humour is a concept that refers to the quality of being amusing or funny. It involves the ability to perceive and appreciate comical or entertaining things. Humour has multiple meanings that are widely acknowledged across different historical, geographical, and cultural contexts. Furthermore, other scientific disciplines have examined humour and provided distinct definitions within their own fields, encompassing areas such as biology, evolutionary theory, psychology, literature, and folklore, among others. This article aims to examine the various aspects of humour as seen through different definitions, disciplines, and cultures. It seeks to demonstrate that understanding and using humour is an essential skill in daily life and language acquisition, particularly for second or foreign-language learners.

Philosophical Beginnings

The Western World

The majority of existing humour studies in English are mainly focused on Western perspectives, examining ideas of humour from Ancient Greek, Roman, Middle-Ages, and Renaissance eras and subsequently exploring more recent publications from Europe and North America. Plato (427–347 BC) is widely acknowledged as the first prominent writer to have conducted a philosophical analysis of humour more than two thousand years ago in Ancient Greece.

Plato

Attardo (1994) and Roeckelein (2002) suggest that Plato classified humour as a human emotion with a dual nature, encompassing pain and pleasure. According to Plato, the absence of self-awareness was what he considered to be ridiculous. Individuals with power despised the conceit, but it was a source of amusement for those who were weak. He witnessed the darker aspect of comedy when people derive pleasure from the misfortunes of others, and he criticized it based on ethical principles. Plato's philosophy, in general, condemned excessive behaviour, including laughter, as it had the potential to undermine rational self-control. From a contemporary perspective on acquiring second languages and cultures, these concepts were precursors to the superiority theory of humour and highlight the importance of instructing individuals on the pragmatics of humour. This includes teaching them how to avoid offending people or engaging in harmful forms of humour.

Aristotle

Aristotle, a renowned philosopher from Ancient Greece (384–322 BC), saw the concept of the absurd as something unattractive that does not induce suffering (Attardo, 1994). On the other hand, his perspective on humour was optimistic, as he believed that humour has the ability to invigorate the soul and function as a potent persuasive tool when employed correctly. Furthermore, Aristotle was the pioneer in examining the logical principles behind jokes and providing insights into the unforeseen funny impacts of

metaphors, puns, and witticisms. Additionally, he was the pioneer in distinguishing between comedy and tragedy. Aristotle had a substantial impact on contemporary notions of humour in the Western tradition. His ideas were also translated into Arabic and were well-known to Arab intellectuals during the middle Ages, along with the works of other Ancient Greek thinkers (Attardo, 1994).

Sociocultural Functions of Humor

When teaching a second language, it is crucial to take into account the social roles that humour plays in the culture being studied, which may differ from the student's own local society. According to Robinson and Smith-Lovin's (2001) research, the purposes of humour are not predetermined but are influenced by the connections between speakers, their social environment, and the joke's subject matter. The comedy of a particular society mirrors its social realities, prevailing attitudes, concerns, and cultural transformations (Kuipers, 2008). Several humour studies (Crawford, 1995 and 2003; Hay, 2000; Holmes, 2006; Kothoff, 2006; all cited in Kuipers, 2008) have demonstrated that men tend to initiate humour more frequently, aligning with Coser's 1960 discovery that individuals of higher status initiate more humour and receive more laughter. However, more recent studies have indicated that women are increasingly forming more jokes, reflecting the improving status of women in Western societies. The humour of culture is contingent upon a society's ideological, social, and political underpinnings, as well as the nature of its governance, be it oppressive or democratic, and the corresponding power relations. Historically, humour has been recognised as a means of alleviating stress, facilitating social regulation, and strengthening social unity (Kuipers, 2008).

Theories of Humor:

Critics and scholars have identified three primary approaches to humor:

1. The Superiority theory
2. The Relief Theory
3. Incongruity theory

The superiority theory is based on the assumption of one's superiority concerning others. Early philosophers believed that laughter is elicited by the misfortunes of others, with Plato treating humor as some kind of malice towards people who are considered inferior and powerless. Hobbes describes this situation as one in which humans constantly compete with one another and look for opportunities to deride and make fun of others. According to him, laughter results from the realization of the fact that we are better than others.

The Relief theory became prominent following Freud's proposition that laughter serves as a means to alleviate stress and release 'psychic energy.' Despite its continual creation, this energy is useless in the human body and so needs to be released. This release is characterised by the expression of laughter and is regarded as advantageous for one's well-being. The Relief theory posits that the sense of "pleasant" sensations occurs when unpleasant emotions such as pain or despair are alleviated by humour. One of the most

influential approaches to the study of humor is the Incongruity theory. Incongruity is considered the core of all humor experiences. Freud (1974) goes on to consider incongruity as being responsible for containing something unexpected, out of context, inappropriate, illogical, exaggerated, and other similar experiences, which becomes the basic vehicle for humor. He explains the incongruity that humor is created out of thus:

"A conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in a joke, the most obvious feature of much humor is an ambiguity of double meaning, deliberately misleading the audience, and is a punch line."

Ritchie et al. (2013) concretely describe how the incongruity principle works in any joke formation. A joke consists of two parts – a 'setup' and a 'punch-line.' Conflict is created between the two because the perceived interpretation of the setup contradicts the punch line. An alternative interpretation of the setup could resolve the punch line issue. Attardo (2010) confirms that to create humor; the incongruity must be resolved.

Humor: Its Definitions and Classifications

The inability to arrive at any proper definition of humor has been discerned in spite of repeated attempts at it in different subjects and fields of study. The complexity of defining humor can be perceived through various ways in which scholars have tried to locate it in different contexts. In a majority of initiatives undertaken to define humor, a common trait of evoking funniness and eliciting laughter has been identified.

Tuncay (2007, p2), in his study of FL teachers' viewpoint, presents humor as 'understanding not only the language and words but their use, meaning, subtle nuances, the underlying culture, implications, and unwritten messages.' Although the 'understanding' Tuncay defines partakes of other aspects of language learning in general, it reaches levels of complexity involved because of cultural differences in learning a language other than one's mother tongue.

According to Ermida (2008), humor can be either verbal or non-verbal. It can be used for communicative purposes or can be a subjective experience. It can be based on everyday reality or purely imaginative; it could be used to entertain or criticize; it could be spontaneous or prepared in advance to execute personal or professional interaction. It can appear as a light joke shared amongst peers or amount to sophistication in literary texts like Shakespeare's plays.

Verbal humor characterizes jokes that involve all linguistic phenomena dealing with phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, texts, and discourse. Fischer proposes that the characteristic features of verbal humor are viewed as playful judgments that act as a force that produces a 'comic contrast.' He further states that joking is merely playing with ideas. For a joke to be complete, at least two distinct, contrasting, irreconcilable, self-consistent ideas must be exclusive. (Fischer 1989)

The Teaching of Humor in ESL

Though the 21st century has witnessed a spate in humor research, there is still no single coherent theory of humor to date. The credit for introducing humor in the field of

Linguistics is assigned to Victor Raskin's pioneering work, *The Semantic Mechanisms of Verbal Humor*. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century witnessed Freud's psychoanalytic techniques entering the arena of humor research. There has been no looking back since, with books and doctoral theses proliferating the scene. Raskin, Attardo, Ruch, etc., generated and maintained the researchers' interest. Martin has observed:

"Over the past two decades, there has been a steady accumulation of research on the topic of humor. Researchers in the area of social, cognitive, developmental, biological, and applied psychology (i.e., clinical, educational, health) all have interesting contributions to make to the study of humor." (2007)

Verbal Humor in Pedagogical Context:

Classroom humor may account for situations resulting from incorrect usage and faulty application of concepts. In language classrooms, particularly humorous situations could result even due to mother tongue interference in direct translations. Innumerable examples have come up where errors on the part of learners lead to funny instances evoking laughter. Some such examples are stated below:

- a. Both of you 3 stand together separately.
- b. Pick up the trash and fall in the dustbin.
- c. Will you hang the picture, or will I hang it myself?
- d. I have two daughters. Unfortunately, both are girls.
- e. Close the doors of the window.

Research on using humor in language classrooms tends to focus on how it is used rather than how it is taught.

Trachtenberg's (1979) analysis of the joke telling as a tool in ESL offers a range of investigations into methods and materials for teaching humor in the classroom. Other detailed studies have also contributed to teaching specific language items or skills using humorous texts. Some such studies include reinforcing vocabulary (Blyth & Ohyama, 2010), detailed study in reading comprehension (Hayati, Shooshtari & Shakeri, 2011), raising learner's metalinguistic awareness (Lems, 2013), teaching cultural content (Rucunski, 2011).

Attardo and Raskin have extensively researched the semantic components of verbal humour. Their research, which is grounded in the incongruity-resolution theory, has led to the development of the General Theory of V. humour. Robert Hetzron (HET 91) provides a detailed analysis of jokes and their accompanying punch lines in the field of comedy. He posits that jokes are comprised of 'pulses.' These pulses are consecutive occurrences in a text or a section of an enumeration. These pulses can be comical, entertaining, or enlightening; the essential requirement is that the final pulse delivers the punch line. Hetzron additionally applies a feature analysis to the punch lines and elucidates the logical strategies employed to enhance the humour of the punch lines.

Marlene Dolitsky's perspective on the 'unspoken in humour' focuses on the joke itself, where the element of 'funniness' is situated. She proceeds to go deeper into society's function in comprehending its community members by examining the shared common knowledge. The language of a certain society establishes the guidelines that govern the actions that its members should and should not take. Marlene believes that humour might be regarded as a linguistic carnival. During the funfair, all regulations are nullified; humour is derived from the alteration and violation of regulations. These criteria are implicit and, as a result, one must analyze a particular component in order to get the comedic value of what is left unsaid.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology serves as the procedural framework employed for the execution of a study, encompassing various techniques and procedures. This includes utilizing primary sources, qualitative and quantitative questionnaires, and specific data collection methods. According to Mukul and Deepa (2011), research methodology constitutes all the methods and techniques applied in the course of conducting research. The investigation was carried out among students pursuing B.Sc. and B.Com. Programs at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

Participants and the Study Design:

In conducting a quantitative and observational cross-sectional survey at Abdullah Women's College, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, data were systematically collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The study specifically engaged undergraduate students with a tenure of over a year at the university, ensuring a representation of diverse social, educational, economic, and geographic backgrounds among participants. Participants were thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives before their involvement. The study, conducted between February and May 2022, followed a voluntary participation model, maintaining the confidentiality of participants' identities throughout. Respondents were presented with a thoughtfully crafted set of questions exploring humor competence, actively soliciting their opinions and responses.

Tools for Data Collections:

A meticulously designed self-administered questionnaire comprising 15 questions was developed for the study. Initially distributed to 100 students, the questionnaire underwent updates to better align with the specific needs and perspectives of the participants. The survey was divided into two distinct components: the first segment focused on eliciting responses regarding participants' comprehension of humor in the English language. In contrast, the second part delved into inquiries about the challenges associated with understanding humor in English as a second language. The formulation of the research questionnaire was thoughtfully executed to align precisely with the overarching objectives of the study.

Statistical Analysis:

In order to fulfil certain requirements, the data collected from the questionnaire underwent thorough analysis and presentation utilising the tools available through Microsoft Office, including Excel spreadsheets. The audience was provided with the data in a visually appealing manner using pie charts and tables. These visual aids were deliberately used to effectively convey the factual information in a straightforward and complete manner. The decision to employ this methodology was taken with the intention of enhancing both the lucidity and the profound understanding of the research outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	%
1	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	1	3.36
2	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	3.57
3	4	4	4	4	2	1	2	4	4	3	1	4	3	2	3.00
4	2	4	4	4	3	4	2	4	4	3	2	4	3	3	3.29
5	4	4	1	2	1	4	3	3	4	3	2	4	4	2	2.93
6	4	4	2	4	1	4	2	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	3.29
7	1	3	2	4	3	2	3	2	3	3	1	3	1	4	2.50
8	2	3	4	4	2	2	4	4	2	4	2	4	3	2	3.00
9	4	2	2	1	2	4	3	4	3	3	2	4	2	2	2.71
10	4	2	1	2	4	2	3	2	4	1	2	2	3	2	2.43
11	3	2	4	4	2	4	4	4	3	3	2	4	3	4	3.29
12	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	3.79
13	4	4	2	2	4	1	2	2	4	2	2	2	4	4	2.79
14	4	4	4	2	4	2	1	1	4	1	2	2	4	2	2.64
15	2	4	2	1	3	4	2	4	4	4	2	2	4	4	3.00
16	4	4	2	4	2	4	1	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	3.29
17	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	4	2	4	4	4	2	3.29
18	2	2	4	4	2	4	4	4	2	4	2	4	4	4	3.29
19	2	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	3.43
20	4	4	2	4	4	3	2	2	4	2	2	2	4	2	2.93
21	1	2	4	4	3	2	4	4	4	3	4	2	3	4	3.14
22	4	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	2	4	4	3.29
23	4	2	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	3.57
24	2	2	4	2	4	2	4	4	1	4	2	4	4	4	3.07
25	3	3	2	4	4	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	4	2	2.86
26	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	4	4	3	3.07
27	4	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	4	4	3	2.93
28	4	4	2	3	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	4	2	4	3.36
29	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	2	1	1	4	4	4	2	3.14
30	4	3	4	3	4	4	1	1	4	3	4	4	3	4	3.29
	3.27	3.27	3.17	3.23	3.03	2.97	2.90	3.07	3.23	2.77	2.73	3.47	3.53	3.00	3.79

Questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	%
1	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	1	3.36
2	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	3.57
3	4	4	4	4	2	1	2	4	4	3	1	4	3	2	3
4	2	4	4	4	3	4	2	4	4	3	2	4	3	3	3.29

5	4	4	1	2	1	4	3	3	4	3	2	4	4	2	2.93
6	4	4	2	4	1	4	2	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	3.29
7	1	3	2	4	3	2	3	2	3	3	1	3	1	4	2.5
8	2	3	4	4	2	2	4	4	2	4	2	4	3	2	3
9	4	2	2	1	2	4	3	4	3	3	2	4	2	2	2.71
10	4	2	1	2	4	2	3	2	4	1	2	2	3	2	2.43
11	3	2	4	4	2	4	4	4	3	3	2	4	3	4	3.29
12	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	3.79
13	4	4	2	2	4	1	2	2	4	2	2	2	4	4	2.79
14	4	4	4	2	4	2	1	1	4	1	2	2	4	2	2.64
15	2	4	2	1	3	4	2	4	4	4	2	2	4	4	3
16	4	4	2	4	2	4	1	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	3.29
17	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	4	2	4	4	4	2	3.29
18	2	2	4	4	2	4	4	4	2	4	2	4	4	4	3.29
19	2	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	3.43
20	4	4	2	4	4	3	2	2	4	2	2	2	4	2	2.93
21	1	2	4	4	3	2	4	4	4	3	4	2	3	4	3.14
22	4	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	2	4	4	3.29
23	4	2	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	3.57
24	2	2	4	2	4	2	4	4	1	4	2	4	4	4	3.07
25	3	3	2	4	4	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	4	2	2.86
26	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	4	4	3	3.07
27	4	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	4	4	3	2.93
28	4	4	2	3	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	4	2	4	3.36
29	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	2	1	1	4	4	4	2	3.14
30	4	3	4	3	4	4	1	1	4	3	4	4	3	4	3.29
	3.27	3.27	3.17	3.23	3.03	2.97	2.9	3.07	3.23	2.77	2.73	3.47	3.53	3	3.79

The table above demonstrates that the question items were administered in a systematic way, and an Excel sheet was utilised to compute the mean score as well as identify the questions with the greatest and lowest ratings. Undergraduate students have emphasized the widespread recognition among learners of the importance of humour in ESL (English as a Second Language) acquisition, based on the received response on this topic. Their recognition goes beyond simple awareness; youngsters show true pleasure for using humour into their development of language abilities. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that a small number of students have reservations about the significance of humour in acquiring a second language. The lack of clarity may arise from limited exposure to language learning environments that incorporate humour.

Furthermore, there is a considerable variation in the analysis of favourable reactions from participants towards humour in ESL learning. Various aspects contribute to its influence, such as the degrees of exposure, individual motivation, specified learning objectives, and the quality of interactions with teachers and peers. However, the overall pattern indicates that most students have a strong desire to develop their ability to understand and use humour. This strong interest indicates a distinct possibility for educators to contemplate the incorporation of activities and exercises centered around humour within the curriculum. Students' responses vary due to factors such as their exposure, motivation, and the objectives they set for learning the language, as well as their experiences with teachers and peers. The highest response, observed in question 14 (*Do you feel motivated towards using humour in your usage of the English language?*), indicates students' keen interest in acquiring humor competence skills. Incorporating this skill into

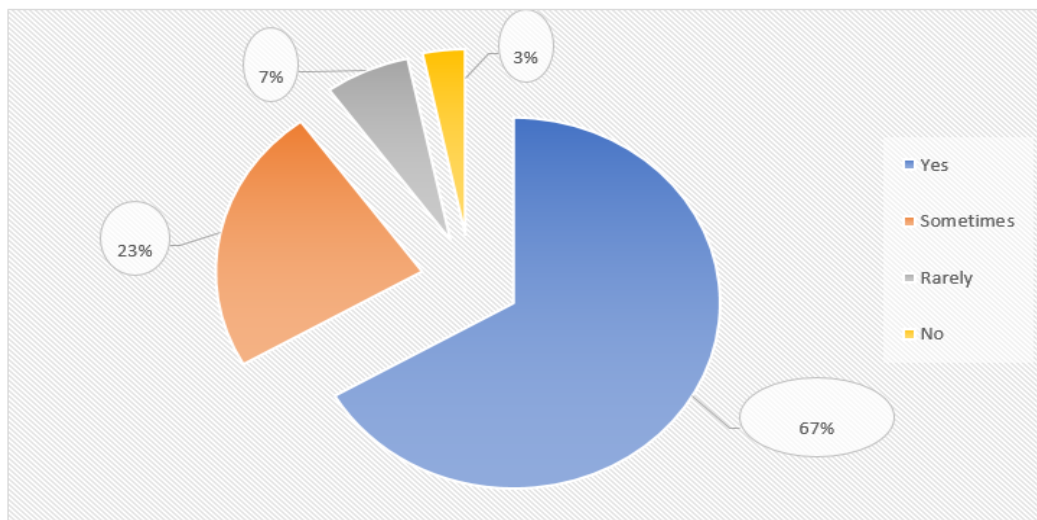
the teaching curriculum is imperative. Activities and exercises tailored to teach humor can be designed to imbue learners with the art of using humor in everyday English usage. The lowest response, particularly in question 12 (*Do you feel understanding humour in English will give you an edge over other ESL learners?*), may suggest a lack of interest or motivation toward acquiring this competency. However, various factors could influence their response. ESL learners who are exposed to and encouraged to understand and develop humor competence, like natural speakers, would undoubtedly gain an advantage over their peers. Therefore, there is room to refine and enhance the teaching methods to accommodate humor acquisition in ESL settings better. Importantly, ESL learners who actively participated in this research on humor competence are the current undergraduate students of B.Sc. and B.Com of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, who have gained a distinct competitive advantage in language acquisition. It can be said in other ways that mastering the art of humor enriches linguistic capabilities and fosters cultural understanding and interpersonal communication skills.

The overall findings of the current study on humor competence at the undergraduate level students of AMU emphasize the indispensable role of humor in contemporary ESL learning environments. The study urges educators to leverage this insight by incorporating humor-related teaching strategies early in learners' language acquisition journey. By doing so, language instructors can create engaging and effective learning experiences that empower ESL learners to navigate language nuances through the lens of native speakers, thereby enhancing their overall language proficiency and cultural fluency.

Highest Rank

14. Q. Do you feel motivated towards using humour in your usage of the English language?

(a) Yes (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely (b) No



Lowest Rank

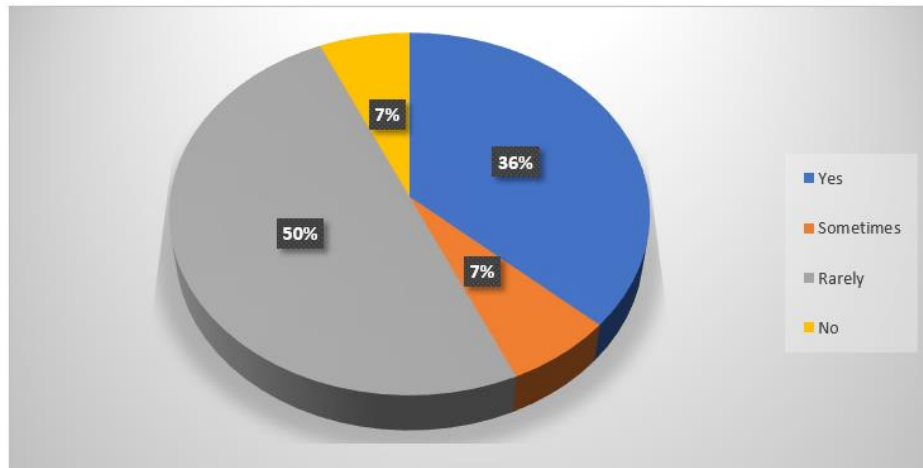
12. Q. Do you feel understanding humour in English will give you an edge over other ESL learners?

(a) Yes

(c) Sometimes

(d) Rarely

(b) No



CONCLUSION

This research delved into the significant impact of humour competence on the process of acquiring English as a Second Language (ESL) among undergraduate students at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Valuable insights were obtained about students' perspectives and attitudes towards humour in English language learning through a carefully designed technique that included quantitative and observational cross-sectional surveys, self-administered questionnaires, and rigorous statistical analysis. The study revealed that learners widely recognize the importance of humour in acquiring English as a Second Language (ESL). In addition to being aware, students demonstrated an authentic passion for incorporating humour into their language development, indicating a strong desire to improve their skills in humour competence. However, a small number of individuals expressed concerns, most likely due to their limited exposure to humour in the context of language learning. Several variables, including as exposure, motivation, and learning objectives, were discovered to impact students' reactions, highlighting the need for customised teaching methods that accommodate the various preferences of learners. Although there are obstacles related to the perceived uncertainty regarding the significance of humour in ESL, the general trend is that students are inclined toward acquiring humour skills.

The research also emphasized the broader ramifications of mastering humour, including improved linguistic abilities, cultural comprehension, and enhanced interpersonal communication skills. Through the early incorporation of teaching practices connected to humour, language instructors may create dynamic and captivating ESL learning settings, enabling students to negotiate complex language structures and enhance their language

skills and cultural understanding. A sprinkling of humor makes teaching effective and motivating for students. The study's results have substantial implications for language teachers, suggesting the deliberate use of humor-related teaching strategies to foster strong ESL learning experiences. Thereby implementing these strategies, instructors can more effectively provide ESL learners with the necessary resources to overcome linguistic obstacles and improve their overall language skills and cultural competence. To sum up, this research only highlights the importance of humour in modern ESL teaching, emphasizing the need for more investigation and incorporation of pedagogies at different levels of study that utilize humour in ESL curricula.

Conflict of Interest

None

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Supplementary Information

Appendix I: Survey questionnaire

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Appendix I

Students' Questionnaire

Name (optional).....

Gender..... Class.....

School/College/University.....

1. Q: Do you understand humour in the English language?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

2. Q: Do you like/enjoy humour in the English language?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

3. Q: Do you feel that humorous text will enhance your learning ability?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

4. Q: Has humour helped you understand a concept better?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

5. Q: Do you feel that one can make ones language skills better by using humour?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

6 Q: Have you ever been in a situation when a second person could not grasp your humour?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

7. Q: Do you face challenges in understanding humour in English compared to your mother tongue?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

8. Q: Do you find yourself lacking in linguistic competence when comprehending humour?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

9. Q. Have you ever had a teacher who used humour in class, but most learners didn't understand what the teacher was trying to say?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

10. Q: Do you have any difficulty comprehending the concept of humour in English due to cultural differences?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

11. Q. Do you feel humour affects your cognitive abilities?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

12. Q. Do you feel understanding humour in English will give you an edge over other ESL learners?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

13. Q. Do you think humour is an important aspect of any language?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

14. Q. Do you feel motivated towards using humour in your usage of the English language?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

15. Q. Do you feel text-based humour should be incorporated in English curriculum?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely

Thank you for your contribution and cooperation.