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Option: Linguistics

Challenges in Non-Native Speakers' Understanding of English Humorous Texts. Case Study of English Language Learners at the Department of English, University of Guelma.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

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DEDICATION

All praise to the most high.

This is for the Family.

Salute!

“Memento Mori,

Amor Fati.”

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Tremendous gratitude and appreciation to Ms. Meriem Serhani.

*Her undivided and unwavering attention, help, care, tolerance and passion have only made me
and this work better.*

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ABSTRACT

This work investigated the issues of interpreting humour by non-native speakers of the language. Humour is claimed to be universal in its structures, but local in its content as it always draws on linguistic, discourse, and cultural elements. Accordingly, it is not easy or straightforward to comprehend for people who come from a different culture. Videlicet, this research aimed at exploring the competencies involved and challenges faced in understanding and appreciating English humorous texts by Algerian learners of English as a foreign language, at the Department of Letters and English Language, University of Guelma. To this end, the research combined qualitative and quantitative analyses. Qualitative research was required to examine the humorous materials used in the test. The latter was conducted to explore the learners' (non)comprehension and (non)appreciation of authentic humour. Therefore, the second part of the test analysis covered quantitative data on the participants' understanding and appreciation of the test's materials. Additionally, the second set of quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire, which aimed at accounting for English Language Learners' (ELLs) self-perceived proficiency level, cultural competences, and attitudes towards humour, in addition to self-reported challenges in understanding English humorous texts. Next in order is probing into possible associations between proficiency level and cultural competences, on one hand; and the ability to understand English humour, on the other. Spearman's correlation tests were calculated to reveal a positive association between both independent variables, language proficiency and cultural knowledge, and the dependent variables of humour recognition linguistically, and culturally, with ($r = 0.311$) and ($r = 0.618$), respectively.

Keywords: Humour interpretation, humour appreciation, cultural knowledge, language proficiency, EFL.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learner
FL	Foreign Language
GTVH	The General Theory of Verbal Humour
IC	Intercultural Communicative
ICC	Intercultural Communicative Competence
KR	Knowledge Resource
LA	Language
LM	Logical Mechanism
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
N-S	Native Speaker
NS	Narrative Strategy
SI	Situation
SO	Script Opposition
SSTH	The Semantic Script Theory of Humour
TA	Target
TL	Target Language

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Communication is defined by how language and culture behave and interplay in mutually recognised contexts. At one of its fundamental levels, humour is a message that is regarded as entertaining, whether it is intentional or not. Interestingly, the domain of communication has just scratched the top regarding humour. Humour is frequently utilised as a persuasive speech act in intercultural interactions to break the ice and develop relationships. Due to a lack of knowledge about the linguistic and cultural facts, humour as a means of socialising with people and understanding “the other” may be jeopardised by misunderstanding and, as a result, causes conflicts. In this interpretation, many linguistic and culturally significant forms, structures, and genres of humour become unnoticed, misinterpreted, or inappropriate. Therefore, understanding humour is arguably challenging. Effective methods to comprehend and appreciate it are enrooted in individual differences, and more importantly, in social dynamics, communication patterns, language competency, and intercultural communicative competence. Accordingly, in the context of foreign language learning, the learner aims to build the required knowledge about the target language and its culture and consequently build intercultural competence, so as to enable successful communication. He is also to develop humour competency, in the same context, building up on the same various competences and abilities, and aiming at effective perception of humorous language.

1. Statement of the Problem

Humour is a universal, enigmatic phenomenon prevalent throughout all societies and cultures, delivering an array of interpersonal, mental, and affective functions (Martin & Ford, 2018). Moreover, humour is attested to be language, context, and culture-specific. On that

account, the receiver of humour in a foreign language must manoeuvre the linguistic and cultural milieu of the new language with agility, precision, and efficiency in hopes of establishing the required competences for the interpretation and appreciation of it. Or, put differently, for non-native speakers of a language, who must navigate both the language and the culture of the foreign settings, the subjectivity, diversity, and sociocultural contexts contained in humorous language can indeed be problematic (Mitchell et al., 2010). A case in point, Algerian English language learners are consumers of English-speaking media. The latter includes humorous materials in their different forms and via different sources (TV, social media, streaming platforms etc.). These Algerians are learning and using a language that is spoken in communities culturally distant from their own. In that case, the ability to understand and appreciate English humour may necessitate these ELLs to take on a wide set of competences and knowledge related to linguistic, societal, and cultural references.

Moreover, it has been noted that very few of the available studies centre on students' process of humour perception, and hardly any previous research has attempted to address the paradigm of humour competence, much alone the case of Algerian students. As a result, the current study was conducted to fill in the gaps by concentrating on Algerian students' (non)ability to understand and appreciate English humorous texts, the competences that impact this ability, in addition to the difficulties that may arise during this process.

2. Aims of the Study

The current research study seeks to investigate the comprehension and appreciation of English humorous texts by Algerian learners of English as a foreign language. In consideration of this, the study dissects separate lines that branch out from the major aim into: (a) attempting to evaluate students' ability to interpret English humorous materials and exploring any role that

students' proficiency level and cultural knowledge play in facilitating the recognition and appreciation of English humorous materials; (b) seeking to highlight the challenges and barriers that affect students' comprehension and appreciation of English humour; (c) exploring the existence, or lack, of a possible reciprocated influence of students' attitudes towards humour consumption on learners' linguistic and cultural knowledge. Accordingly, conducting the present research addresses three essential inquiries:

- To what extent are Algerian students of English able to understand and/or appreciate English humorous texts?
- Do English language learners' levels of proficiency and knowledge of the target language culture influence their ability to understand English humorous texts?
- What are the barriers that affect students' understanding and appreciation of English humour?

3. Research Hypothesis

Humorous discourse is attested to be language, culture, and context-dependent. In this study, linguistic, contextual, cultural, and pragmatic contribution to the process of humour perception and appreciation is presumed. Hence, if the perception of humour was dependent on the aforementioned factors, then Algerian students' levels of proficiency and cultural competence would be related to their ability to understand and appreciate English humour:

- **H₁**: Algerian students' understanding and appreciation of English humorous texts would be related to their levels of proficiency and cultural competence.
- **H₀**: Algerian students' understanding and appreciation of English humorous texts would not be related to their levels of proficiency and cultural competence.

4. Research Methodology and Design

4.1. Research Method

This study combines quantitative analysis of two sets of data, and qualitative, semantic and discourse, analyses of the research's humorous materials. The qualitative assessment of the materials, chosen to be used in a test, aims to account for students' ability to understand and appreciate the target language's humour, their language proficiency, their knowledge of the target language culture and humour, and the associated barriers they face in the process of interpretation. For this purpose, the test was carried out to elicit natural responses to various authentic humorous stimuli. Additionally, students were assigned a questionnaire to examine their English proficiency levels, exposure to the English language and culture, as well as attitudes, knowledge, and challenges in regard to humour. The next step is to perform the Spearman's correlation tests to look for any correlations between proficiency level, cultural knowledge, and ability to understand humour.

4.2. Population of the Study

This study's target population was Second-year Master students at the Department of Letters and English Language. A random sample of 80 students has contributed to the research out of the total theoretical population of (107). The selection of postgraduates was predicated on the essence that these students would have plausibly enhanced their proficiency levels and acquired adequate experience with the target language and culture since having progressed through the lengthiest duration of education conceivable for an Algerian English Language Learner. In parallel, the previous two facets are believed to be the predictors of Algerian English learners' ability to comprehend and perceive English humour.

4.3. Data Gathering Tools

Two separate tools were adopted to collect data for the study: a combined online test and a questionnaire. The objective of the test was to examine how successfully students understood the linguistic and discourse features of a range of humorous materials, which in turn elicited either positive or negative responses, indicating varying levels of humour appreciation. The test served as the primary tool while the questionnaire is a follow-up tool. The questionnaire solicited information about students' self-perceived levels of language proficiency and familiarity with the target language (TL) and its culture, as well as their attitudes, knowledge, and challenges regarding humour. The questionnaire results contributed to analysing and understanding the students' understanding, or not, and appreciation, or not, of the test's humorous materials.

5. Structure of the Dissertation

The current dissertation is divided into a general introduction, three chapters, and a general conclusion. Chapter one covers the notion of humour, accounting for its definitions. An overview of the theories of humour is established with notable attention to the linguistic aspects. Furthermore, the main varieties of humour are documented and the influence of language and culture on humour in an intercultural dimension is further highlighted. While Chapter two encompasses the competences that are involved in the communication of humour and examining humour within an intercultural context. Additionally, substantial attention is given to the processes of comprehending and appreciating humour. Then, the last section attempts to identify relevant barriers and difficulties that may impede the process of humour communication. The third chapter presents a field investigation. It establishes the study's methodological structure by detailing the research tools, procedure, and population. It also includes an analysis of the data accumulated throughout the investigation with the purpose of delivering answers to the research

questions. Finally, the paper closes with a general conclusion that summarises the research's fundamental findings, highlights its shortcomings, and suggests further possible inquiries.

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Introduction

Humour does not cede itself to a simple definition. The complexity of humour, excited various researchers for a variety of attempts toward defining and characterising humour. It is, therefore, a concept that not only rejects to be defined but also boasts its indefinability.

This chapter delves deep into humour and its definitions. It explores, with a prominent focus on the linguistic aspects, the theories of humour. Additionally, it presents a detailed and exemplified analysis of the established types of humour. Conclusively, the chapter probes into the impact of language and culture on humour in an intercultural dimension.

1.1. Defining Humour

The entry of the term ‘Humour’ into the field of lexicology was rather late. Far from what it means today, the term *humour*, which is of Latin origin, used to mean ‘fluid’ or ‘moisture’. Furthermore, the lexicology of the term dates back to the medical theory of Hippocrates that records a denotation to the human body having four different humours: blood, lymph, yellow bile, and black bile (also called ‘black humor’). As a result, the general sense of the term ‘humour’ was used for centuries to allude to a person’s temperament (Bhikha & Glynn, 2017). According to Nijholt (2018), in the 18th and the 19th century, the definition of humour shifted to the completely different modern understanding and meaning we know of the term today. As per (Escarpit, 1960, p. 10) the French coined the difference between the two terms *humour/humeur*. The first refers to humour as a ‘rational mechanism’ and the second signifies ‘medical’ or ‘temperamental’ humour.

Beyond the labelling, *The Cambridge Dictionary* defines *humour* as “the ability to be amused by something seen, heard, or thought about, sometimes causing you to smile or laugh, or the quality in something that causes such amusement” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022a). Attardo

(2003) employs two criteria to determine if an act is humorous: (a) whether it causes people to laugh or smile; and (b) whether it was created with the aim of causing people to laugh or smile. Moreover, he designates three different types of humorous discourse: universal humour, cultural humour, and linguistic humour. A universal joke derives its hilarity mostly from the setting and general structuring of the real world. A cultural joke requires cultural insights to comprehend and enjoy, whereas a linguistic joke is related to specific elements of the language; phonology, morphology, or syntax (Schmitz, 2002). Furthermore, Raskin (1985, p. 8) states that due to the sheer etymological instability induced by the use or availability of identical terms (such as laughter, comedy, and joke) there is little consensus among theorists as to what the term 'humour' signifies. As Carrell (2008) argued this notion declaring, "For some, humor is its physical manifestation, laughter; for others, humor is the comic, the funny, or the ludicrous. For still others, humor is synonymous with wit or comedy and so the terminological fog abounds." (p. 306). Even though defining humour is difficult, our operating definition adopted in this work regards humour as a cognitive ability/process to produce and/or perceive funniness, or comicality.

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

1.2. Theories of Humour

Research on humour, as it stands today, is considered a multidisciplinary domain of research (Attardo 2017; Attardo & Raskin, 2017), being that it conceives interest from a variety of fields such as linguistics, philosophy, sociology, and psychology. Despite the numerous contributions of Aristotle, Plato, Kant, Freud, Herbert, and other current humour researchers like Attardo and Raskin, it is not possible to provide an overall account of humour as a phenomenon, and as Berger (1998) points out existing frameworks of humour still contain some form of limitations.

Berger in the *Encyclopedia of Humour Studies* (2014), categorised humour research into three fields and orientations that clarify the causes of laughter and humour perception:

a) the Psychological-relief theory of humour, which was centred on Freud's ideologies; b) the Philosophical-superiority theory of humour, which is predicated on Plato and Aristotle's contributions and places emphasis on the non-symmetric connection between interlocutors; and c) the Incongruity theory of humour, which is founded on Script Opposition and is deemed the birthplace of linguistic theories of humour (Attardo, 2014).

1.2.1. Theories of Superiority

Humour, according to this famous and most frequently recognised viewpoint, is a manifestation of a person's sense of superiority over others. Superiority, disparagement, hostility, and degradation aspects have all been used to represent this sort of theory. Hence, this stand's proponents specify their different forms by multiple labels, such as hostility theories, superiority theories, and so on (Morreall, 1987). Moreover, the superiority theory of humour may be traced all the way back to Plato and Aristotle in ancient history, as well as Thomas Hobbes, a modern-day pioneer of humour research. According to the Superiority Theory, people tend to laugh at other people's misfortunes or their own. Thus, Hobbes contends 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 in Human Nature, reprinted in Morreall, 1987, p. 20).

Humour, according to Gruner, is “playful hostility” but it is not a “genuine” violence, meaning no physical harm or abuse is involved. Reworked it as the Superiority Theory of Humour, Gruner (1997, as cited in Martin & Ford, 2018, p. 46) presents a three-part thesis underpinning this theory:

- Every humorous event includes a winner and a loser.
- Incongruity is always present in a humorous event.
- Humour necessitates a surprise factor.

In point of fact, people commonly laugh despite not feeling superior. According to Schwarz (2010, p. 48), Hobbes' theory of humour has elements of influence, domination, and superiority since he is a political philosopher who views humour as a method of demonstrating authority in the “*social sphere*” [emphasis added]. As a result, his theory expands to include additional theoretical aspects of humour, as well as various causalities for what constitutes humour and on what basis it ought to be formed. As a result, alternative hypotheses, such as incongruity theories and release theories, can be used to explain other probable origins of humorous occurrences.

1.2.2. Theories of Incongruity

The incongruity theories can be traced back to 1758 in *Reflections Upon Laughter*, by Francis Hutcheson and were expanded and emphasised later on by Kant, Kierkegaard, and Schopenhauer (Kulka, 2007, p. 321). According to Critchley (2010) “Humour is produced by the experience of a felt incongruity between what we know or expect ..., and actually takes place in the joke, gag, jest or blague” (p.2). While humour (the cognitive state of amusement) can be

experienced, incongruity theory stresses cognition, that is the intellectual faculties to detect, interpret, and classify incongruous alterations and therefore comprehend a situation and its consequences. The latter implies that incongruity theories are based on the understanding of humour, not so much on the appreciation of humour. Humour, according to this idea, stems from an intellectual identification of inconsistencies between what we know and what we anticipate to happen. Kant's description of mirth (laughter), which he frames as “affection resulting from the rapid change of a strained anticipation into nothing” relies heavily on the quality of incongruity (As cited in Morreall, 1983, p. 16).

Yet with all, Mulder and Nijholt (2002, p. 4) highlight the important aspect of incongruity to be the “congruous resolution”, which produces a humorous outcome rather than the incongruity itself. Mulder and Nijholt's remarks follow the laws of the theory of incongruity-resolution, which propose that the punchline doesn't quite meet the recipient's expectations and that a funny joke always puts the teller on the "wrong track" just so the "revelation of the punch line" will surprise him or her (Schwarz, 2010, p. 46). When the receiver notices the incongruity, he or she will try to fix it so that the punchline is understandable, implying that comprehending the joke is contingent on the recipient's ability to fix the inconsistency.

1.2.3. Theories of Release

Humour is described using a tension-release model, according to relief theories. They emphasise the fundamental structural and psychological mechanisms that stimulate laughter and less on articulating humour. Herbert Spencer and Sigmund Freud are two prominent relief theorists, as they contributed two variations of the relief notion to take into account: (1) the strong version which asserts that almost all laughter is the consequence of an excessive release of

energy; (2) the weak version states that humorous laughter frequently entails a release of stress or effort.

Herbert Spencer tackles the notion of laughter in *“The Physiology of Laughter”* (1860), offering a hypothesis in which “cognitive agitation” and stimulation generate energy that “must waste itself in one manner or another”. Additionally, he claims that “Nervous excitation always tends to beget muscular motion”. Laughter, as a type of physical activity, may be used to communicate many types of nervous energy. Spencer's hypothesis was not intended to be a rival to the incongruity theory of humour; instead, he sought to clarify why a specific mental agitation triggered by a ‘descending incongruity’ culminates in this distinctive bodily movement. Thus, he offers the general concept of laughter as a means of releasing pent-up energy.

Afterwards, Sigmund Freud developed his notion of how laughter can relieve stress. He presents three major causes of laughter in his work *“Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious: jokes, comic situations, and humorous situations”*. All three of these conditions necessitate the discharge of “psychic energy” via laughter (Smuts, 2006). As shown by Freud, this "psychic energy" in our systems is designed to assist us to suppress feelings about taboo subjects like sex or death. We chuckle and laugh when this energy is discharged, not just due to the release of this energy, yet also because these taboo notions have been indulged. Moreover, Freud’s beliefs view humour as a process of releasing stress produced by societal conventions and restraints, particularly when discussing controversial matters (Raskin, 1985, pp. 38-39). We can also combine the relief theory with the incongruity theory, as Morreal (1983) declares that “that the relief theory is not necessarily competing with the other two theories of laughter ..., it is simply looking at a different aspect of the phenomenon.” (p. 21).

All versions of the release of tension model are commonly regarded as insufficient since they are unable to account for all types of humour. Some types of humour tend also to occur even without obvious build-up of tension, unlike those that employ the taboo and focus on tension as a prevalent feature of humour, although it is in no respect universal.

1.3. Linguistic Theories of Humour

Raskin's (1985) '*Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*' marked a significant shift in the linguistics of humour pushing pragmatics and semantics to be at the core of humour research. Consequently, Raskin's contribution propelled both of them to the spotlight (Attardo & Raskin, 2017). Furthermore, Morreall (1997) contends that the contradiction between the audience's expectations and what they receive is one of the major components of the incongruity theory, which is concerned with the linguistics of humour investigation. Despite the reality that it does not account for the significance of other factors such as the culture-dependent context, as Martin (2007) and Olin (2016) argue, it is extensively used by many humour experts. As a result, the Semantic Script Theory of Humour and the General Theory of Verbal Humour paradigms are the direct consequence of the incongruity theory.

1.3.1. The Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH)

In his ground-breaking work *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor* (1985), Raskin offered a whole presentation of the Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH). The hypothesis is based on two main attributes, suggesting that any humour cycle can be understood in two opposed ways. These two prerequisites or parameters for humorous texts were outlined by Raskin and described as "overlapping" and "opposing" respectively. "Overlapping" involves adopting two possible interpretations of the very same text at the same time; and "opposing" entails categorising these two interconnected meanings as fundamentally opposed (Raskin 1985, p. 99). Raskin explores

the importance of “*script*” which he regards as the meaning of the joke's text. Raskin (1985, p. 81) identifies the concept of a ‘script’ as “a large chunk of semantic information surrounding the word or evoked by it” (p. 81; see also Attardo 1994). Attardo adds that it is a mental structure that the speaker has internalised. It offers the knowledge on how things are performed and organised (Attardo 1994, p. 199). “*Overlapping*” arises anytime “stretches of text are compatible with more than one reading” (Attardo 1994, p. 203), as demonstrated in the Semantic Script Theory of Humour.

In brief, the proposition of Attardo encompasses Raskin's Semantic Script Theory of Humour (1985): “if a text is compatible fully or in part with two scripts, and the two scripts happen to be opposed to each other, then, and only then, will the text be classified as *funny* by the SSTH” (Attardo 1994, p. 205). On this account, humour is elicited due to the punch line, a trigger at the climax of the joke, which enables the audience's awareness to immediately change from the main script to the secondary opposing script. Although Raskin attempted to produce a model that would have been unaffected by the three major facets of theories, he was unable to do so. Attardo (1997, p. 396) claims that the SSTH may be simplified to an Incongruity Theory, with the occurrence of incongruity serving as the oppositional necessity. Another criticism is that the whole idea is solely centred around jokes, leaving other forms of humour unaccounted for.

1.3.2. The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH)

The general theory of verbal humour (GTVH) was devised by Attardo and Raskin in 1991 and thus can be defined as a re-examination of Raskin's semantic script-based theory of humour (SSTH). The GTVH may be thought of as a refined and broadened version of Raskin's SSTH. Additionally, the GTVH focuses on verbal humour, as it characterises 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 six Knowledge Resources (KRs) according to Attardo and Raskin (1991, p. 312) encapsulate:

Script opposition (SO):

The *Script Opposition* dimension introduced by Raskin's SSTH is the emphasis of this Knowledge Resource. It refers to a conflict involving two scripts or concepts that are deemed to be incompatible and overlap in a certain fashion, culminating in discrepancy in the humorous discourse.

Logical mechanism (LM):

The *Logical Mechanism* is a metric that addresses the incongruity induced in the audience's mind by the humorous content. To put it differently, it allows the audience to see through the Script Opposition in the humorous material and determine which script is intended. Attardo (1994) frames it as the following: “the Logical Mechanism is the parameter that accounts for the way in which the two senses (scripts) in the joke are brought together” (p. 199)

Situation (SI):

A humorous plot's objects, actions, and tools must be included in the *Situation*. Attardo (2002) emphasises that “any joke must be ‘about something’ (changing a light bulb, crossing the road, playing golf, etc.)” (Attardo 2002, p. 179).

Target (TA)

According to Attardo and Raskin (1991, p. 301) and Attardo (2002, p.178), the target of the joke refers to a person, a group, a behaviour, or even an ideological target that is mocked or criticised. To put it another way, 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.

Narrative Strategy (NS):

The Narrative Strategy is often regarded as a “rephrasing of what is known in literary theory under the name *genre*” (Attardo 1994, p. 224). It is in charge of a joke's syntactic-semantic structuring. To put it differently, a joke must be told using an idiomatic expression or slang, a proverb or a simple narration, a dialogue, or a riddle.

Language (LA):

According to Attardo (2002, pp. 176-177), contains all necessary information for a text's “verbalization”. It is in charge of the correct framing of the text as well as the “positioning” of its functional qualities. Accordingly, the language symbolises the joke's substance, which is presented within the constraints of language (Krikmann, 2006, p. 37). To sum up, LA pertains to the texts and other linguistic aspects that are implemented in a humorous narrative.

The GTVH, according to (Koponen 2004, p. 49), intends to get rid of the need for more instruments to be developed as a means of assessing different types of humour. The basic notion underlying Attardo (1994) is that the theory may be applied to everything from simple puns to lengthier jokes, and Attardo (1998) stretches it to a wider range of humorous texts. In particular, Paolillo (1998, p. 268, cited in Koponen 2004, p. 49) relates the notion to comic text analysis and reinforces that it is “easily extendable also to visual humour such as comics.”

This theory suggests that these criteria, which are organised in a hierarchical framework, should be used to analyse and explain verbal humour. Every one of those Knowledge Resources adds to the humorous quality of the humour cases, with Script Opposition at the highest level standing as the most deciding factor.

Figure 1.1*The Hierarchical Structure of KRs*

Note. The hierarchical framework of the six Knowledge Resources (KRs) of the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH). Adapted from Script theory revis(it)ed: joke similarity and joke representation model by Attardo & Raskin, (1991, p. 325)

1.4. Types of Humour

Jokes (Canned Jokes)

The "canned" joke is one that is delivered orally during conversations or documented in collections and is often regarded as the original type of verbal humour. A joke, according to the commonly accepted definition, consists of a build-up and a punchline. According to Sherzer (1985, p. 216), a joke is considered to be “a discourse unit consisting of two parts, the set-up and the punch line.” Attardo and Chabanne (1992) claim that the set-up usually consists of a narrative or discussion, meanwhile, the punchline is the structure's last element that stimulates, intrigues, and causes a discrepancy with the set-up (see also Attardo 1994, 2001; Suls 1972).

Wordplay (Puns)

Wordplay is a common method used in joke-telling. Any humorous expression in which the humour is derived from the connotations, sounds or ambiguities of language is known as wordplay (e.g, puns). This does include a speaker intentionally punning, or a listener spotting an ambiguity in the speaker's words and manipulating it for comedic purposes (Wilson, 2021, pp. 46-48). Furthermore, the double meaning that comes from a language's literal and metaphorical meanings, according to Freud (1905/1960, p. 39), is “one of the most fertile sources for the technique of jokes.” It's considered a common technique to construct jokes by combining or mixing the multiple meanings of a single word.

Irony and Sarcasm

As mentioned in Martin & Ford (2018, p. 30), the speaker makes a statement in which the literal meaning is the polar opposite of the intended meaning (for example, saying "What a wonderful day!" while the weather is cold and rainy). Irony and sarcasm are frequently used interchangeably. Grice (1975) defines irony as a specific conversational implicature induced by an explicit infringement of the first maxim of "quality". The implied meaning of statements is essential, as Grice states: “I cannot say something ironically unless what I say is intended to reflect a hostile or derogatory judgement or a feeling such as indignation or contempt.” (p. 124 As cited in Ruiz et al., 2013, p. 1). The cooperative principle, maxims, and implicatures are required to effectively understand irony.

Parody

Korkut proposes an encompassing definition of ‘*Parody*’ in which he describes it as “an intentional imitation – of a text, style, genre, or discourse – which includes an element of humour and which has an aim of interpreting its target in one way or another” (2005, p. 14). Various

forms of parody have already been provided by different scholars, however; Korkut distinguishes three categories of parody. “Text parodies and personal styles” is the first of these sorts. This form of parody is sometimes directed against a specific piece of literature, certain phrases and words, or even the style of an author. The second type is "genre parody," which is directed against a literary genre with its own principles and tropes. The final form of parodying is "discourse parody," which is fixated on the philosophical, societal, religious, or ideological language of a particular individual, group, or activity (2005, pp. 15-17).

Satire

The term “*satire*” originates from the Latin noun “*Satura*” which implies “full plate” or “plate full of various fruits”. However, satire in the field of humour research is defined as “aggressive humour that exposes contradictions of individuals or social institutions through ridicule.” (Ruiz et al., 2013, p. 30). As a result, the intention of using satire is to elicit, not just mere laughter, but laughter with the intention of reforming. It has a target, such as pretence, falsehood, dishonesty, and vanity, which the satirist aims to mock.

Spoonerisms

Spoonerism (also known as speech errors) is another form of humour in which speaking errors occur when one or two letters or sounds are switched around within one or in between two individual words, either purposefully or inadvertently. According to Oxford Dictionaries, spoonerism is “a verbal error in which a speaker accidentally transposes the initial sounds or letters of two or more words, often to humorous effect”. Following Vousden et al. (2000), spoonerisms are divided into three main basic forms: 1) *anticipation errors*, 2) *perseveration errors*, and 3) *sound exchanges*:

1. As in 'bake my bike,' a section emerges too soon (take my bike)

2. As in 'beef noodle,' a section appears later than initially anticipated (beef needle).
3. Happens when two phonemes are flipped, as in 'teep a cape' (keep a tape).

Putdowns and self-denigrating humour

Self-disparaging, self-denigrating, or self-deprecating humour are the most distinctive pragmatic types of humour that arise whenever the individual focuses a criticism or uncomplimentary remark towards himself. It signifies humorous statements directed against oneself as the victim of the joke. This can be performed to prove humility, comfort the listener, or familiarise and create empathy within the listener. Additionally, this type of humour uncovers the self-assuredness and predetermined self-presentation ideals that underpin a self-deprecating behaviour. As a result of using the strategy of self-deprecation, the speaker demonstrates a good self-image (Norrick, 1993). The use of this form of humour is regarded to be a source of self-awareness, seen as the speaker demonstrates the willingness to make jokes about one's own inadequacies or shortcomings.

Retorts

Following Dynel (2009, p. 1292), a retort is a type of humour that overlaps with witticism and is typically employed in response to a speaker's previous speech. Merriam-Webster Dictionary characterises a retort as “a quick, witty, or cutting reply” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 2022). Moreover, Dynel (2009, p. 1292) contends that the initial speaker does not anticipate retorts since they constantly deviate from expectations, providing a comical consequence. In other words, humour is then formed when the second speaker alleges to have misinterpreted the first speaker's earlier speech and therefore alters the "intended meaning" and produces a new one.

Teasing

Teasing has been defined in a variety of ways by various academics. Many of these interpretations claim that teasing can include aggression (Alberts, 1992), whereas others emphasise that teasing is a happy medium between aggression and affection (Brenman, 1952). The hostility in teasing has been considered to be "ostensible," since the teaser's purpose is to question or dramatise a person's behaviour in a positive sense instead of being actually insulting (Dyner 2009, p. 1293).

Banter

A one-time tease can escalate into a prolonged series of crosstalk, labelled as *banter* if both individuals are willing to get involved in a humorous exchange. Banter, as defined by Norrick (1993, p. 29), is a “rapid exchange of humorous lines oriented toward a common theme, though aimed primarily at mutual entertainment rather than topical talk”. One of the most important characteristics of banter is that successive retorts are delivered at a quick pace, resulting in a verbal ping-pong battle between the two (or more) participants (Chiaro, 1992).

Register clash

Register clash exhibits itself in two different ways: upgrading, which includes employing elements from a higher register in casual speech, and lowering, often known as bathos, which consists of adopting terms from a lower register in some kind of formal writing. This activity frequently depends not only on the style itself but also on the communicated concepts, which must and should not be expressed (in)formally only if the humour is intentional (Attardo 1994, 2001).

Memetics

A meme, often known as an “internet meme” is a term describing the quick adoption and propagation of a “particular idea presented as a written text, image, language ‘move,’ or some other piece of cultural “stuff” found online (Lankshear & Knobel, 2019). Another possible definition is that an “online meme” is a terminology for a catchphrase or idea that spreads expeditiously throughout the internet from one user to the next (Encyclopaedia Britannica). A word, a picture, a song, or a video may very well be deemed an internet meme.

1.5. Culture, Humour, and Language

There is an interactive link in intercultural communication that connects individuals or various groups belonging to cultural contexts with certain qualities of symbols and values denoted by words, actions, conventions, gestures, and more. Humour is a representation of this communicative behaviour (Hunston & Oakey, 2010). As a result, the communication of humour between the speaker and the listener elaborates their expressive behaviour, referring to humour's communicative function. Furthermore, because this communication is associated with one's own culture, it is quite likely that this procedure preconditions linguistic and sociocultural knowledge in order for the communicated information to be understood. On that account, humour is recognisably predicated on ambiguity and attempting to play with various levels of linguistic formation, yet it is also well established that acknowledging humorous discourse requires various aspects of cultural preconceptions (Prodanovic-Stankic, 2017; Chiaro, 1992).

To put this into context, to take in a joke, one must be familiar with the linguistic and cultural frameworks wherein the joke is placed. The focus is on the cultural context which is understood by members of one linguistic community, in which exists ideal common forms of expression, expectation, and perception (Kecskes, 2015, p. 114). This being so, the humorous discourse that

is prevalent in daily life, is widely acknowledged to be profoundly rooted in society, necessitating a variety of cultural presuppositions in order to comprehend it. As a result, humour experts and humour receivers must be familiar with and understand both the language, the cultural background, and the environment in which humour is used. More significantly, humour is characterised as a part or component of human connection and social engagement tied to entertainment-related motives, whose perlocutionary aim is to amuse the listener (Martin 2007; Scheel 2017, Stankic 2017).

The important idea highlighted here is that (a) the cultural background that encompasses language characteristics is held by all affiliates of a linguistic group, and (b) there are customary and accepted manners of stating things within each linguistic society (Kecskes 2015, p. 114). As a result, comprehending humour is highly dependent on cultural specificity, and on what might be funny in a particular societal structure (Antonopoulou 2004, p. 224). Moreover, the reason seems to be that, according to Sharifian (2011, p.5), language is profoundly embedded in a group-level consciousness that evolves through the relationships among members of a particular culture. Language is one of the instruments for preserving and transferring cultural constructs that originate through group-level thinking through time and space because language and culture are indivisible, linked, and intimately connected.

Considering the prior analysis of the relationship between language, humour, and culture, it is reasonable to conclude that both linguistic and cultural elements shape the production and interpretation of humour. Furthermore, as per the model of incongruity, Ross (1998, p. 7) challenges the notion that incongruity is determined by each culture or community. As a result, what one community could anticipate may not be anticipated by another, hence the culture & language determine both the incongruity element and the joke itself.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the notion of humour. It began with a brief introduction to humour and the complexities of presenting a complete definition of the term. The section also included a brief review of some of the most important theories of humour, such as theories of incongruity, superiority, and release, with an emphasis on the linguistic semantic theories of humour, GTVH and SSTH, which will further be applied to analyse the data of this investigation.

Furthermore, several of the types of humour provided will be significant to the humour analysis in Chapter Three. The chapter culminates with a comprehensive examination of the relationship between humour, language, and culture, as well as how individuals from other cultures perceive what is and is not humorous. To put it another way, what is humorous in one culture may be uninteresting or humourless in another.

CHAPTER TWO: HUMOUR AND COMMUNICATION, COMPETENCES AND CHALLENGES

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Introduction

To analyse the impact of humour understanding in human interaction, we must evaluate the significance of the latter as it is a useful communication tool to express many things and build interpersonal connections and relationships. The process of communicating humour represents the mastery of both production and perception which require certain cognitive faculties to be at hand.

This chapter tackles the different competencies that function as prerequisites for the communication of humour. In addition, it brings humour to the intercultural context and zeroes in on the comprehension and appreciation of humour. Moreover, this part highlights the possible barriers and challenges that might hinder the communication operation.

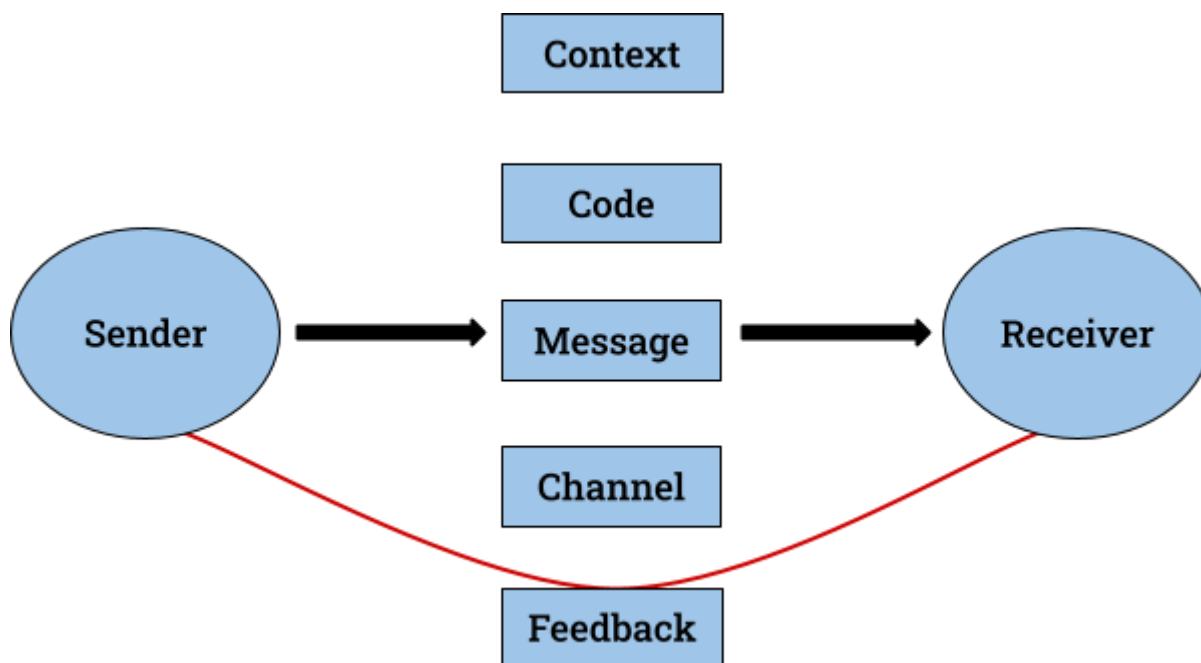
2.1. Communication

Communication can be defined as a verbal exchange in which individuals engage in order to build and transmit meaning. Communication develops connections and effectively makes coordinating feasible. Additionally, the message includes a goal or a target in view. The communicator seeks to fulfil something via communication, whether intentionally or unintentionally. According to Giffin and Patten (1976), communication is both the action of producing and attributing meanings. It is the interaction and exchange of thoughts between participants. Furthermore, communication may be characterised as the field that deals with information transfer and dissemination. We can assume from this that communication is a universally valid activity.

Aristotle was the first to provide an appropriate foundation for communication. He presented a simple communication model with three elements: a sender, a receiver, and a message. Later, Lasswell introduced the element of a “channel” which Daniel (2010) proposes for another

possible nomenclature as the “medium”, through which the communicated message goes. Face-to-face conversations, phone calls, text/email messaging, and internet exchanges are all valid options as media of communication. Moreover, there are several instances of communication channels. Lasswell's premise recognises that audiences are heterogeneous and that they may be addressed through a variety of channels with varying degrees of effectiveness (Lasswell, 1948, p. 40).

By the same token, Roman Jakobson proposed an expanded model in 1958, in which he recognises the necessity of shared context between individuals who have a common concept of meaning. It is impossible to isolate a message out of its context without compromising its significance (see Fiske, 1990; Lanigan, 2013). Furthermore, David Berlo devised the SMCR (Source, Message, Channel, Receiver) model in 1960, which was a radical departure from linear models. He envisioned communication as a cyclic pattern in which the speaker obtains feedback from the recipient (see van Ruler, 2018). Communication skills, attitudes, experience, social structure, and culture are all aspects that impact the sender and recipient. On top of that, structure, content, interpretation, and coding are all essential features of the message. Accordingly, attitudes, social and cultural background, communication and interpreting skills, coding and decoding abilities are communicative prerequisites for the correct and appropriate use of language.

Figure 2.1*An Envisioned Model of Communication*

Note. An envisioned model that explains communication through combines the two aforementioned models, Jakobsen's Model of Communication and Berlo's SMCR Model of Communication.

2.2. Communicative Language Competences

Competence is a practical terminology that was developed and utilised by some of the most significant language theories of the twentieth century. A case in point is Chomsky's linguistic competence, according to his theory of Generative Grammar. Linguistic competence refers to the native speaker's understanding of grammatical structures and their application in genuine performance. Distinguishably, Hymes' Communicative Competence model contends that one's linguistic competence is inextricably linked to his or her command of the utterance's situational, pragmatic, socio-cultural, and aesthetic suitability. Moreover, while describing communicative language competence as a concept, Canale and Swain classified it as having three basic

constituents: **linguistic**, **sociolinguistic**, and **pragmatic** competencies, each including a different set of aptitudes, knowledge, and abilities (Canale & Swain, 1980).

In an extensive work co-written by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain and printed in *Applied Linguistics* in 1980, the concept of “communicative competence” was re-examined and revised. Consequently, the new definition embodies four significant interrelated groupings: **grammatical/linguistic competence** (mastery of a language's code i.e., phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexico-semantic structure), **sociolinguistic competence** (the skill of language use standards), **discourse competence** (cohesiveness in structure and coherence in connotation in spoken and written texts), and **strategic competence** (verbal and non-verbal communicative approaches utilised to rectify disparities in knowledge or inadequate fluency).

2.2.1. Linguistic Competence

In 1965, Chomsky established the notions of linguistic competence and linguistic performance in his book *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, in which he was alluding to the dichotomy between “the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language”, and “the actual use of language in concrete situations” (Chomsky 1965, p. 4). Furthermore, his conceptual theory, referred to as Generative Grammar, emphasises the mastery of linguistic composition that is required for comprehension and performance. Videlicet, it is prevalently concerned with the fundamental set of principles acquired by a native speaker of a particular language and deployed in real performance (see Chomsky 1965, p. 8). In summary, **linguistic competence** refers to a person's understanding of lexical elements as well as morphological, syntactic, sentence, grammatical, semantic, and phonological norms. These are also the factors required for the creation and interpretation of humour

2.2.2. Sociolinguistic Competence

The “knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language and discourse” is interpreted as sociolinguistic competence (Brown, 2007, p. 247). Accordingly, Brown highlights awareness of dialect variation, register selection, naturalness, awareness of cultural allusions, and figurative speech in his interpretation. Thus, sociolinguistic competence is the particular capacity of using a language in the manners that are pertinent to the contexts in which the communication happens. By way of illustration, this competency covers the socio-cultural principles of utilising language in social circumstances, such as how to offer a gift applying proper cultural practices, how to deliver and receive compliments according to cultural standards, and how, when, to whom, and what sort of humour to make in a given setting. Thus, language functions (such as apologies, requests, asking permission, and cracking jokes) are frequently linked to socio-cultural norms.

Furthermore, all of the predispositions that impact language output, such as those distinctions in dialect or variety, discrepancies in register, and naturalness, and particularly the capacity to decipher cultural references and figures of speech, are linked to the exegesis of cultural and figurative language. Hence, they are all part of *sociolinguistic competence*.

2.2.3. Discourse and Pragmatic Competence

Discourse competency, according to Canale (1983, 1984), is the mastery of norms that define how forms and meanings are joined to generate a coherent consistency of spoken or written texts. Coherence in structure and consistency in substance both are essential for a text's wholeness. Cohesiveness is produced by the employment of cohesion mechanisms (for example, pronouns, conjunctions, synonyms, parallel sequences, and so on) that assist to connect single sentences and statements to a structural totality. The tools for producing coherence, such as repetition,

continuity, consistency, concept relevancy, and so on, allow for the organisation of meaning, or the establishment of a logical link between sets of utterances/ideas (Pujiastuti, 2016).

In Foreign-Language studies, pragmatic competence is commonly described as the capacity to make and interpret statements (discourse) that are appropriate for the socio-cultural milieu in which communication occurs. Moreover, Bachman's (1990) paradigm aids in the widening of the idea of *pragmatic competence*, which is then widely used in foreign language acquisition and assessment, and which encompasses the notion of *discourse competence* itself. There are two key components to it: organisational and pragmatic competence (Bachman, 1990, p. 84-87). In sum, “*grammatical*” and “*textual*” competence comprise the **organisational competence**, whereas “*illocutionary*” and “*sociolinguistic*” competence are the two core talents of **pragmatic competence**.

In Bachman's (1990) pragmatic competence, *illocutionary competence* refers to the notion of speech acts, which includes iteration activities, propositional actions, and illocutionary acts. According to Bachman (1990: 90), it is required to utilise illocutionary competence with such a variety of abilities to succeed in generating a valid utterance.

- a) To figure out which of numerous viable statements is best suitable in a given situation.
- b) To carry out a meaningful and linguistically well-formed propositional activity.
- c) To be able to comply with and by reasons other than linguistic competency.

2.2.4. Strategic Competence

Strategic competence is defined by Canale and Swain as “verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence” (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 30). Strategic competency is extremely important for foreign language learners since it

is utilised to manage challenging circumstances and communicate effectively. In other words, the cognitive capacity to interfere in all types of research remedies to practical issues (these are organised chains of actions that the student moves through for the aim of learning) is known as strategic competence.

In general, this competency includes verbal and nonverbal communication techniques for engaging with prospective communication breakdowns, such as realising how to sketch a map to clarify directions; recognising how to request someone to restate what they stated, or demonstrating to them that you do not fully comprehend; the ability to deduce the interpretation of words (in text or speech act) from context; and realising what to go through when we do not comprehend jokes or make bad jokes.

2.3. Intercultural Communication

The element of culture is intrinsic in the description of intercultural communication (IC). Cultural awareness is essential since “culture is largely responsible for the construction of our individual and social realities and for our individual repertoires of communicative behaviours and meaning” (Porter & Samovar, 1994, pp. 19-20). Researchers have defined and characterised intercultural communication in a variety of ways. Gudykunst (2002) argues the idea that IC occurs “between persons from various national cultures, and many scholars limit it to face-to-face communication” (p. 179). Porter and Samovar (1994) proposed that, from the standpoint of discourse formation, “intercultural communication occurs whenever a message that must be understood is produced by a member of one culture for consumption by a member of another culture” (p. 19).

In addition, cross-cultural communication necessitates awareness of one's own preconceptions along with others' preconceptions and anticipations. However, the underpinning

and covert beliefs that are necessary for normal communication are underlying implicit and buried. According to Gudykunst and Kim (2003), cultural expectations are taken as a given and hence hard to articulate due to their hidden character. Thus, speech acts, communicative circumstances, and rituals are tangible examples of cultural assumptions in action. Speech acts, for instance, are expressions (words and phrases) used to improve communication in social contexts. Nevertheless, several communicative situations remain subjective or culture-specific, making them challenging to comprehend or convey. Because there may rarely be a matching circumstance in the target language or culture, some acts do not cross nor transfer over properly.

Humour is frequently employed as a significant speech act in cross-cultural interaction. While laughter is universal, it is seldom translated and is very personalised, contextual, and culture-bound. Consequently, many jokes, sarcastic statements, and ironic comments stay unnoticed, misinterpreted, or insulting for being culturally relevant.

2.3.1. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

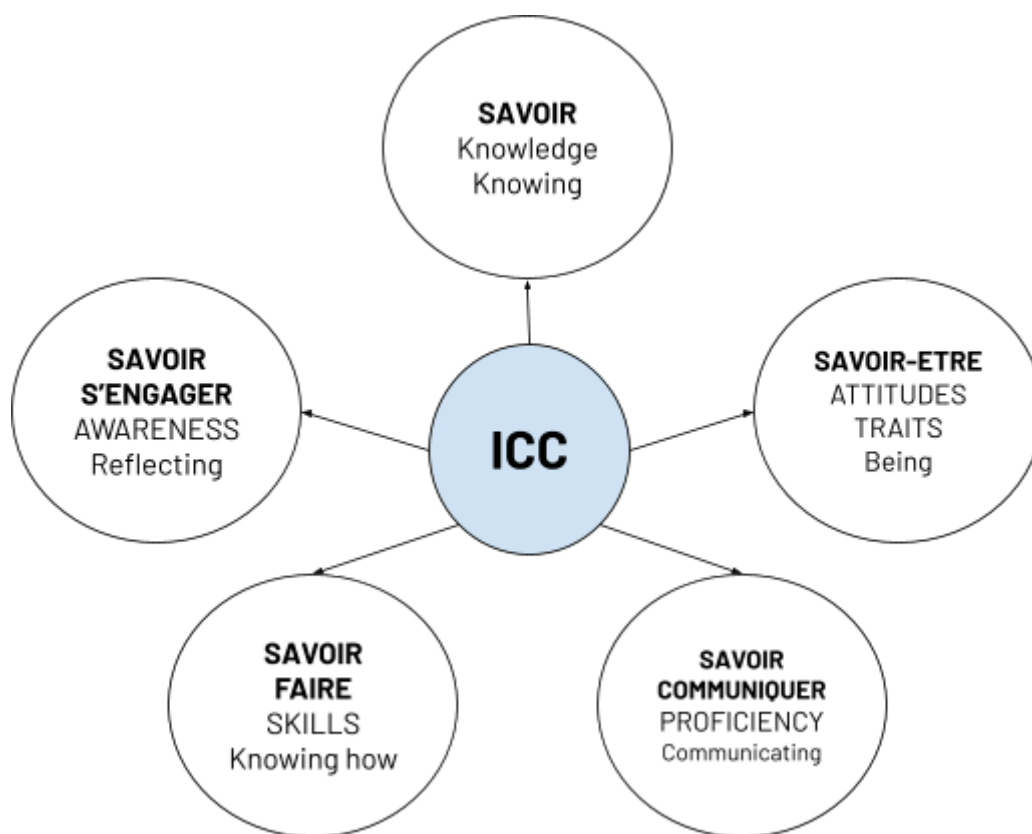
According to Sapir, one's community's linguistic patterns efficiently affect the individual's perception of reality and the decisions made in deciphering that reality (Sapir, 1951, p. 209). According to Whorf, the linguistic framework of a language shapes the framework that the mind imposes on reality in subtle and fundamental ways (Whorf et al., 1957). The basic aspects of what has become known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis are these two viewpoints as presented by Sapir and Whorf. The latter entails that everything that influences language acquisition should also influence one's ability to understand other cultures. Franz Boas points out that learning the language of a culture is based on mastering the language of such a culture. The more fluent one's command of a particular language seems to be, the better one's comprehension of the culture connected to that language is expected to be. (As cited in Pearson, 1977, p. 71).

Byram's (1997) formulation and characterisation of ICC is the most widely used. The skillset necessitates learned proficiency “in attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to intercultural competence while using a foreign language” (p. 71). The learner's sentiments toward the other are analysed, and as a byproduct, the learner is transformed. Moreover, students (re)evaluate their pre-existing notions about everyone else prior to literally embarking on a journey of learning regarding the other with the intention of cultivating a propensity “to seek out and engage with otherness in order to ultimately experience relationships of reciprocity” (Moeller & Nugent, 2014, p. 7). People who develop ICC, contrary to the IC paradigm, form such interactions while utilising the foreign language in a manner that is convenient to all parties involved. They make it easier for people from different cultures to communicate.

People controlling ICC combine their language skills (including sociolinguistic and discourse competencies) with their understanding and awareness of the culture of others. Additionally, they control skills and abilities to discover and gain cultural knowledge, reflect on their own and others' cultures, and readiness to engage in learning new languages. This seems to be an intricate structure as Byram (1997) mentions “does not therefore depend on a concept of neutral communication of information across cultural barriers but rather on a rich definition of communication and on a philosophy of critical engagement with otherness and critical reflection on self” (p. 71). More visibly, individuals who studied overseas, according to Kitsantas (2014), exhibit diverse viewpoints that impact their communication behaviour. As a result, students who have been subject to a variety of international environments are more open-minded than those who have not. This paradigm has five “savoirs” each of which, based on Byram's (1997) framework, serves a significant part in the development of intercultural competence.

Figure 2.2

ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence) Savoirs



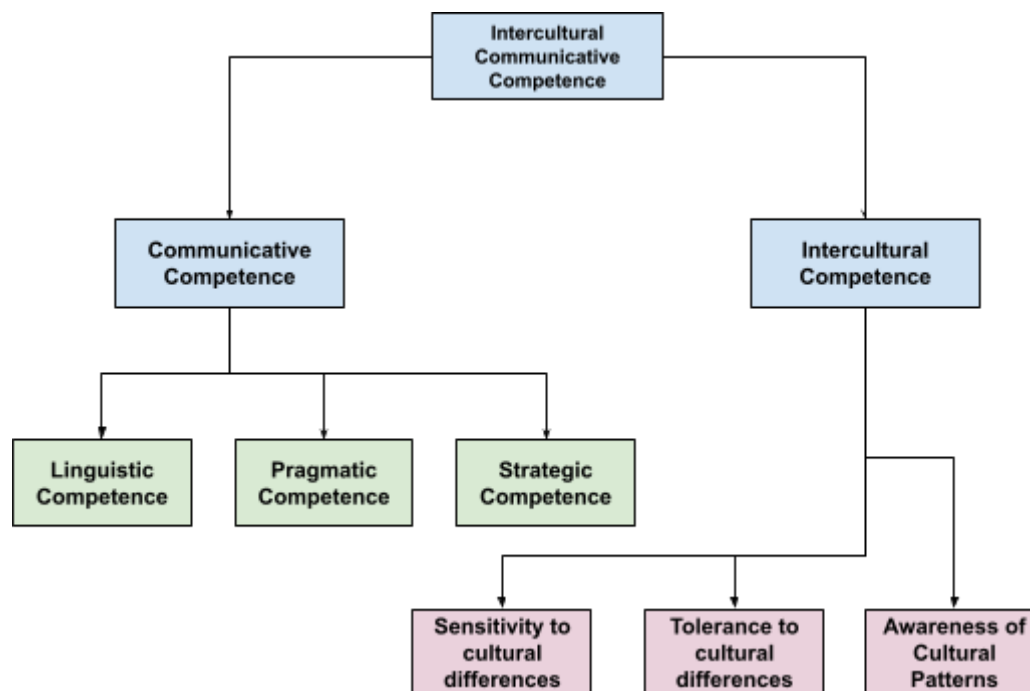
Note. A model of intercultural communicative competence that consists of five components framed in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness. Adapted from *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative* by Byram (1997, p. 73).

Communication competence, according to Wen, encompasses linguistic, pragmatic, and strategic skills. Intercultural competence is founded on emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions. Wen (2004) proposes a two-fold synthesised design of intercultural communication ability. Communication and intercultural competence are two forms of competencies in this domain. When highlighting the goal of language education, it should be articulated based on communication with language learners of different cultures whereby the particular (i.e. target) language is spoken. The communication in such a situation might not be adequate until it is

supplemented by multifaceted cultural awareness, which is meant to contribute to a dynamic of approval in which interlocutors strive to establish a cultural framework that is acceptable to all participants in the conversation (Çetinaevci, 2017).

Figure 2.3

Intercultural Communicative Competence Model



Note. The Intercultural Communicative Competence: Canale's (1983) and Wen's (2004) reframed model. Adapted from Interpersonal communication competence: cultural underpinnings by Lesenciuc & Codreanu (2012, p. 135)

In summary, the relevance of pragmatic, sociolinguistic, strategic, interlocutional, and discourse competence should be recognised, albeit under various labels (Pavičić Takač & Bagarić Medve as cited in Lang, 2018). Consequently, they demonstrate that effective communication cannot be achieved solely by implementing lexico-grammatical components beyond the context, but by emphasising the significance of a component that includes language

users and their skill to decide when, how, in what situation, to whom, and why in a particular sociocultural context (Pavičić Takač & Bagarić Medve as cited in Lang, 2018).

2.4. Humour Perception

Drawing on Canale and Swain's hypothesised aspects of communicative competence, humour can be perceived via the same four competencies listed earlier. Being an aspect of it, humour and communication have an almost inextricable link. People must understand how to utilise suitable language for the adequate context while conversing with others. Thus, it implies the same if what is conversed is humour. By the same token, communicative competences boost an ability to interpret other people's expressions, which may diverge from our own, including humour.

In line with research on effective communication, and when exploring humour support techniques, Hay (2001) presented some approaches to that end. She addresses humour support featuring scaled implicatures ('implicature' alludes to communication inference). Moreover, these three implicatures: 1. *Recognition*, 2. *Understanding*, and 3. *Appreciation*, every of each constituting the others: "Understanding entails recognition; appreciation entails both recognition and understanding" (Hay, 2001, p. 67). Furthermore, Hay includes a fourth aspect of "*Agreement*" to all previous implicatures (recognition, understanding, and appreciation). That there is a reliance on both appreciation and agreement. As a result, she further points out that people might be insulted and amused at the same time, indicating that they accept the humour yet disapprove of it.

2.4.1. Humour Competence and Joke Competence

Humour and humour perception have offered a significant hurdle to linguistic and pragmatic inquiry, particularly with the introduction of the SSTH. The capacity to comprehend and produce

humorous texts based on the syntactic computation of the elements of a verbal text sets off amusement and results in a natural response. Hence, humour competence includes grammatical and discourse competency, communicative patterns, and the established rules of language use inside one culture (Attardo, 1994).

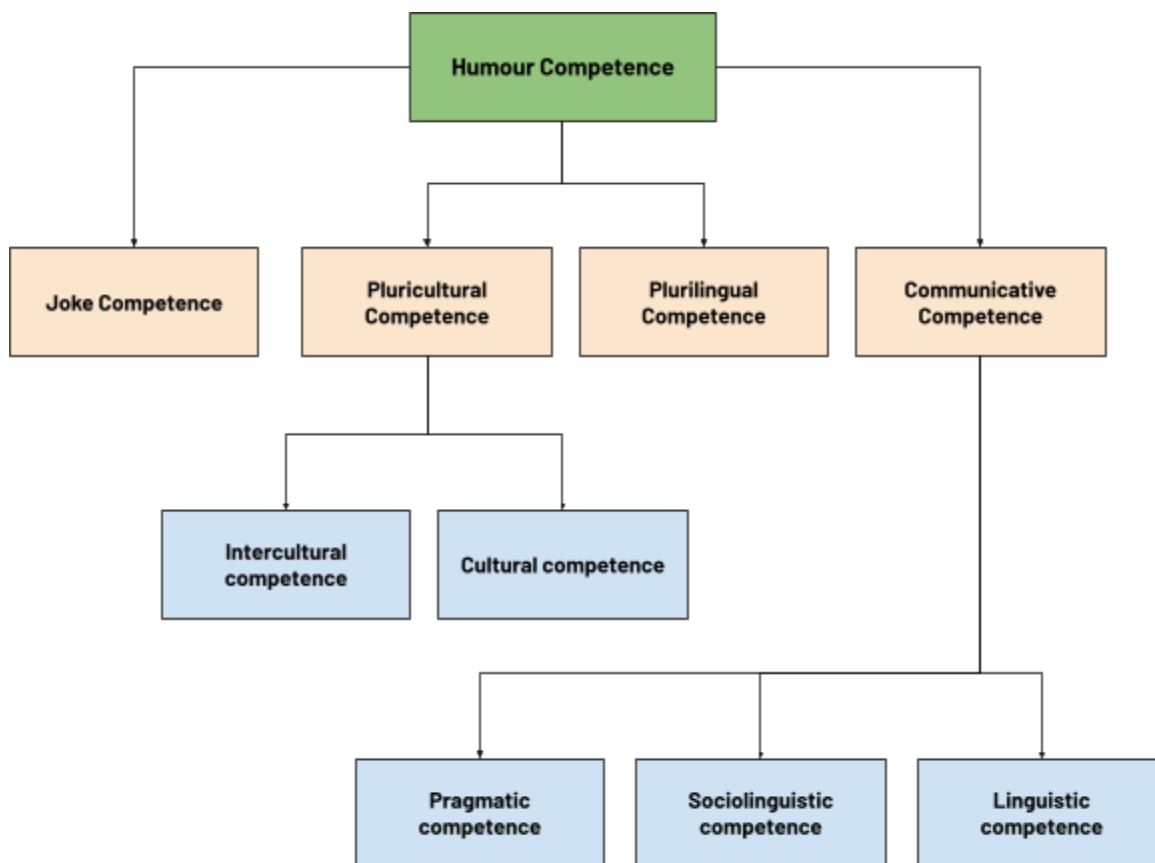
A native speaker's (NS's) linguistic competence is comprised of joke competence (i.e., the capacity to recognise a text as fulfilling all the qualities of a joke text) and humour competence (i.e. the listener's capacity to perceive a joke as either humorous or not) (Bell, 2007, pp. 369-371). The argument that humour competence is a dynamic concept is a key point in Carrell's (1997) theory. She claims that a NS's linguistic competence includes knowledge of the language and knowledge of language usage. Her argument is that to perceive a verbal joke as funny, users of a language require two areas of knowledge: 1) knowledge of the language use and 2) capacity to classify it as entertaining (cited in Ai Hoa, 2018, p. 393).

2.4.2. Humour Competence Model

Hay (2001), who updates Carrell's (1997) model and emphasises the chain of operations the interlocutor engages in when encountering a humorous text, acknowledges the dynamic character of humour competence. The concept of humour appreciation is fundamental to this new paradigm because whether or not a spoken joke is identified as such and enjoyed by the listener determines whether or not it is humorous. Moreover, linguistic proficiency is one sort of ability required to grasp a joke, but not solely. Adopting the speaker's form of discourse, which is not only linguistic but also culturally relevant, entails partaking in the same sort of humour. So, if we consider the existence of more factors that contribute to developing humour competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), it's reasonable to presume that linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence are all equally significant (Harakchiyska & Borisova, 2020, p. 772).

Three elements of Canale's theory, which is an updated iteration of Canale and Swain's prior communicative competence blueprint, may be regarded as the foundation of a humour competence paradigm: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence. This assertion is supported by the premise that every one of those three competencies focuses on a different component of joke recognition, comprehension, and appreciation. While grammatical competency is required for effective cognitive perception of a verbal joke, sociolinguistic and discourse competencies involve an EFL learner's ability to find and comprehend a foreign culture's humour-related activities as well as the qualities attributed to them. It is hard to establish strategic competence inside the structure of humour competence because Canale's (1983) model emphasises the adoption of verbal and non-verbal communication techniques by EFL students (which are utilised as compensating measures in instances of communication failures). The key challenge here is that when EFL learners do not succeed in perceiving a funny narrative they tend to employ minimisation or deferral tactics (Eliss, 1983 cited in Harakchiyska & Borisova, 2020) to substitute for a lack of language capabilities, which leads to the joke being misunderstood.

It may well be argued that linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse/pragmatic, and intercultural communicative competence are all inherently connected to humour competence. This encompasses EFL learners' aptitude to make a distinction between a funny and a non-funny text (joke competence), along with plurilingual and pluricultural competence (i.e., the capacity to efficiently operate in multiple cultures and languages).

Figure 2.4*The Humour Competence Model*

Note. Harakchiyska & Borisova's (2020) integrated humour competence model.

2.5. Challenges/Barriers in Intercultural Communication

Recently, there seems to be a rising attention on improving EFL learners' intercultural awareness (Davies, 2015). According to the research on foreign language humour, failing to use humour in a foreign language leads to communication breakdowns. Learners would be largely prepared for intercultural interaction through language learning (Heidari-Shahreza, 2018). Additionally, humour perception is influenced by three primary variables: the complexity of humorous inputs, the ease with which they are understood, and the emotional depth with which

they are experienced. Humour is also a phenomenon that involves common codes, experience, and emotional importance (Chiaro, 2009). The amount of time required to interpret incongruities is adversely connected with the difficulty of humour comprehension (Cunningham and Derks, 2005).

2.5.1. Cultural and Social Barriers

Humour, in and of itself, is a cultural phenomenon. Because there are instances of overlapping, it's tough to establish clear lines. Firstly, nonetheless, "universal" jokes that mock outcasts, imbeciles, and those on the outskirts of society (Davies, 2011) are culturally bound, meaning that practically every culture does have its distinct "butt" of the joke (McGraw and Warner, 2014). The English enjoy mocking the Irish, whereas the French-speaking Swiss and Belgians are the target in France, and the Poles in the United States (Davies, 2011). Secondly, humorous relationships vary by culture (i.e., the societal norms of who can joke with whom and about what).

Moreover, particular stereotypes, like the spiteful Scotsman, the foolish Irishman, the precise German, the arrogant American, the underendowed East Asian male, and the overendowed Black man, are predicted to appear in English-language humour. The French, Spanish, and Italians are known for being wonderful lovers who place a high value on romance, whether licit or immoral (Blake, 2007, p. 27). However, individuals are moulded by their cultures, and as a result, they acquire specific communication patterns based on their cultural conditioning. People from different cultural backgrounds tend to misunderstand each other's meanings in intercultural communication. One obstacle that arises as a result of this is ethnocentrism (see Türker, 2015).

Furthermore, incongruity across many linguistic degrees is a key component of humour. Thus, linguistic proficiency is necessary for understanding the humour's substance since it helps

the audience to recognize hilarious intents (Carrell, 1997). Semantic models, according to Vaid (2000), dictate how incongruities are produced and solved, particularly when fundamental and marginal word interpretations are conflicting. Learners of a distinct language, as well as users of various varieties of the same language, have nuanced differences in their semantic and *conceptual representations*.

2.5.2. Linguistic and Metalinguistic Barriers

Jaroenkitboworn (2015) investigated EFL Thai students' understanding and appreciation of jokes. She suggests that students' humour competency (which includes various other competences) has an impact on their ability to comprehend humour in the foreign language (FL). Similarly, humour perception is claimed to be influenced by linguistic competence. Thus, we may say that this criterion alters the manner EFL learners absorb humorous texts since language competency impacts EFL learners' understanding of humorous content and also shows an impact on humour appreciation. Both English first language (L1) and FL users struggled to grasp and appreciate humour with increasing morphological and grammatical complexity, according to Chen and Dewaele (2019). Hence, the ability to recognise variations in pitch, stress, repetition, excessive prosody, distinctive grammatical patterns, code, styles, and register switching is also required for detecting and resolving incongruities in humour (see also Holmes, 2000; Vaid, 2000; Norrick, 2007).

When dealing with individuals of another culture, sociolinguistic transference is the usage of one's language system or cultural group's standards of speech (Chick, 1996). This is particularly common when one or more interlocutors are communicating in a foreign language yet following his or her native tongue's norms of discourse. Hence, it may also be apparent amongst persons who communicate the same language but adhere to separate speech groups with distinct

conventions of communication. Since language is the primary mechanism of communication, words are how it is accomplished. Language appears to be a hindrance on several levels, including semantic (meaning), syntactic (grammar), and phonological (pronunciation, intonation, pitch, and so on). As a result, linguistic barriers might appear in a variety of forms (varieties of language, Jargon, or unfamiliar terminology, etc).

2.5.3. Psychological and Emotional Barriers

Since the human mind is so complicated, not every communication leads to comprehension. Numerous types of psychological limitations might obstruct comprehension. Emotions are one of the most typical psychological communication obstacles. If negative and positive feelings are not controlled, they operate as obstacles. Emotional experiences can be positive, such as joy and happiness, or negative, such as fear and rage. These feelings might be linked to the message that was heard, or they could be existing in the sender's or receiver's minds even prior to the information exchange (Kapur, 2018).

Furthermore, the emotive relevance of the languages wherein humour is communicated varies, which might alter the multilingual audience's humour perception. When opposed to L1 consumers, FL users had lower emotional expression and dissociation, as well as a lower sense of humour (see Dewaele, 2013; Dewaele et al., 2021). As a result, a FL consumer may be unable to recognise intentional incongruities in humour and, as a result, will not be entertained. The absence of the needed positive emotions for humour enjoyment may lead the humour to miss the mark. Put differently, when looking for the necessary incongruity and/or resolve, the listener must be emotionally engaged or in, an open or a humorous, frame of mind to indulge in humorous practices (Veale, 2004). Our emotional responses to others are not always reasonable or impartial; they might be intense. Furthermore, a narrow mind is one that rejects a new thought

or point of view on a topic since it contradicts his own. Such people create an opinion on a topic and then decline to engage with anybody who holds an opposing point of view. A closed mentality might be the consequence of bad experiences or just a negative habit. These psychological barriers, that are extremely tough to overcome, impact language perception, and communication flow, in addition to the appreciation and enjoyment of humour.

Conclusion

This chapter tackled communication and its various frameworks and models, with a central focus on Canale and Swain's model. Along with an envisioned model which fits the communication of humour. In addition, the language competences involved in communication were explored highlighting the linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and discourse competences. Since the focus of this paper is English humour, intercultural communication was presented by corroborating the intercultural competence through both Byram's and Wen's models.

This chapter also looked into the process of humour perception shedding light on humour recognition and appreciation, presenting Harakchiyska & Borisova's humour competence, which in addition to joke competence it included the set of discussed competences. The chapter concluded by investigating cultural, social, linguistic, meta-linguistic, psychological and emotional challenges and barriers that impede the humour perception process.

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD INVESTIGATION

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Introduction

This chapter accounts for the findings of the study designed to investigate Algerian English language learners' recognition and appreciation of authentic English humorous texts. The chapter addresses the description of the sample population, in addition to the research design and methodology, including the two research tools opted for to collect two sets of data. Furthermore, it proceeds with statistical analysis to test the correlation between learners' competences and attitudes, on one hand; and their recognition and appreciation of humorous materials, on the other. In the end, the chapter presents a summary and conclusion of the findings.

3.1. Methodology

The present research employed an assortment of research methods, including two sets of quantitative data evaluations, as well as qualitative semantic and discourse analyses of the humorous materials used in the study. The use of multiple tools and mixed methods is proper to meet the aims of the study and answer the research questions on the subject matter of non-native speakers' abilities and challenges relating to humour perception.

- An Online Humour Test, which served as the primary research tool, was used to measure and gather data on students' humour perception; including linguistic and cultural content understanding and humour recognition and appreciation.
- A students' questionnaire was conducted as a follow-up tool to provide the relevant data about the self-perceived proficiency and knowledge of culture, language, and humour of participants in the study.
- Statistical analyses were conducted to test the correlation between language proficiency and cultural knowledge, on one hand; and humour comprehension, on the other hand.

3.2. Population and sampling

The study foci were on Second-Year Master's students at the Department of Letters and English Language, of the University of Guelma (Algeria). Accordingly, a sample of eighty (80) students, out of a total population of 107, was chosen at random from those who opted to engage and respond to the online questionnaire and test. The choice of second-year master's students was motivated by the fact that they have spent at least 11 and 12 years studying English as a foreign language, and consequently, they would have had sufficient experience and contact with both the language and culture in focus. They are a desirable target pool for this investigation since they are preferably more adept than the remainder of the students.

3.3. Administration of the Humour Test and Students Questionnaire

It was difficult to draw Second-Year Master students into The University premises during the second semester and administer the research instruments. As a result, the questionnaire and the test were integrated into a single web form and delivered using the Google Forms service, which is "is a free online tool from Google which allows users to create forms, surveys, and quizzes as well as to collaboratively edit and share the forms with other people." (University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2013, para. 1). Besides, respondents were contacted using social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Additionally, the form was published in the Second-Year Master's students of Guelma Facebook community, page, and group, along with direct emails and mailing lists. Accordingly, they were forwarded a hyperlink to the form, which gave them access to provide entries for one week.

Respondents were made aware that all responses would maintain confidentiality and that no email addresses, private details, or any other piece of data would be gathered. Only 80 participants out of the total potential demographic (107) cooperated to answer the questionnaire

and test, indicating that a significant number of the students did not want to participate. Nevertheless, participants have provided supportive responses both through the form's feedback option and comments under the social media posts.

3.4. The Students Questionnaire

3.4.1. Description of the Questionnaire

The questions of the questionnaire were predicated upon the literature on the subject of the communication language competencies and humour perception, taking into consideration the self-perceived language proficiency of the participants and their knowledge of the English language culture; in addition to the aspects of humour perception abilities and challenges, and the established framework between language, culture, and humour. The semi-structured questionnaire consists of nineteen (19) items divided into three sections. All the questions but one were multiple-choice, with participants being required to select from a list of options. While in some cases, the clause "other" is included, unrequired, to supply additional information or different inputs. The final question was the one left open-ended in an attempt to explore participants' views, thoughts, and feedback on the topic.

The first section, "Background Information," was designed to collect demographic data. It encompassed mainly three (03) questions in which respondents were queried about their age, gender, and duration of their formal English study.

In the second section, "Language Competences and Language Use", seven (7) questions were purported to draw out information about students' Self-Perceived English Language proficiency, academic achievement, knowledge of the English Language's cultures, and to what degree and through which medium they do use the Language outside the classroom, in addition to possible communication difficulties they usually face when they are subject to the English language.

The third section is titled “Humour, Culture, and Language”, and included nine (9) questions. Its objective was to know students’ familiarity with and attitudes towards humour. It also aimed at gathering data on the possible cultural, linguistic, or other kinds of barriers that might hinder their recognition and appreciation of humour.

3.4.2. Analysis of the Questionnaire Findings

Section One: Background Knowledge

Question One: Gender

Figure 3.1

The Students’ Gender

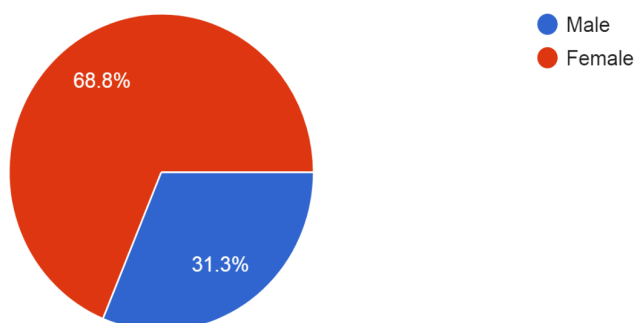


Figure 3.1 demonstrates that females represent the majority of respondents with 68.8%. In comparison, males constitute only 31.3% of the participants. These rates are consistent with previous research conducted in The English Department at the University of Guelma, where most of the participants and respondents have consistently been females (see Badji, 2020; Laribi & Zitouni, 2020). Females account for the large bulk of postgraduates at the Department of Letters and English Language, therefore this was an anticipated end result. In addition, this female dominance trend is prevalent throughout most Algerian institutions, and a large majority

of them were documenting higher female enrolment numbers (Ouadah-Bedidi, 2018, as cited in Badji, 2020, p. 50).

Question Two: How old are you?

Table 3.1

Participants' Distribution According to Age (N= counts).

Age	N	Percentage
21	05	6.25%
22	19	23.75%
23	22	27.5%
24	18	22.5%
25	11	13.75%
26 or older	05	6.25%
Total	80	100%

The above table shows the homogeneity of the sample regarding age and generation distribution. We record that 73.75% of our participants' age range is between 22 and 24 years, which accounts for the majority of our sample. Accordingly, the age parameter cannot be investigated as a feature influencing the participants' perceptions of humour. It is, nevertheless, an indication of how this grouping belongs to the same generation (Gen Z). Inevitably, these students have specific preferences in the appreciation of humour (Kuipers, 2017, as cited in Meaney, 2020).

Question Three: For how long have you been studying the English language (middle school, high school, and university including this year)?

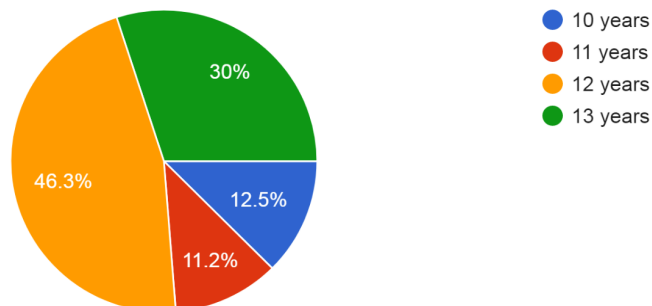
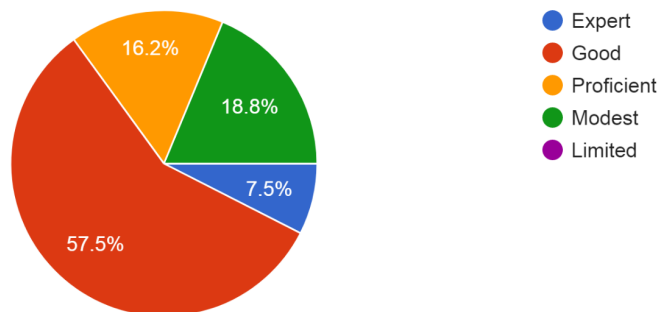
Figure 3.2*Participants' language learning experience*

Figure 3.2 indicates that the large majority of the respondents (46.3%) have studied the English language formally for “12 years”. While second the majority, a big portion (30%) have had “13 years” of English language education. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents’ did not have a big margin in years of language learning. The results show that most of the participants possess adequate knowledge and familiarity with the target language and culture.

Section Two: Language Competences and Language Use

Question Four: Please rate your English language proficiency level.

Figure 3.3*Students' Self-perceived Language Proficiency*

The participants were requested to self-assess their overall English proficiency using a portrayal of the scales adopted from the internationally recognised IELTS, International English Language Testing System (How IELTS Is Scored, 2022). The vast majority of participants reported that they possessed a high degree of proficiency (good, very good, or expert). The findings presented in figure 3.3 illustrate that the bulk of the participants (81.2%) assessed themselves to be “proficient” with 16.2%, “good” with 57.5%, and “expert” with 18.8%, regarding their English language proficiency. The question was included to see if the participants met the required proficiency level before being exposed to any humour, particularly linguistically difficult humour. As to whether low proficiency will be present and might create a plausible impact on their linguistic understanding and humour appreciation (Chen & Dewaele, 2019). As a matter of fact, these statistics are self-reported by the respondents, they do not reflect their true mastery of the English language. The students’ level of proficiency would be considered to investigate any impact of it on their humour competence.

Question Five: Your Academic Achievement

Figure 3.4

Students’ Academic Achievement Levels

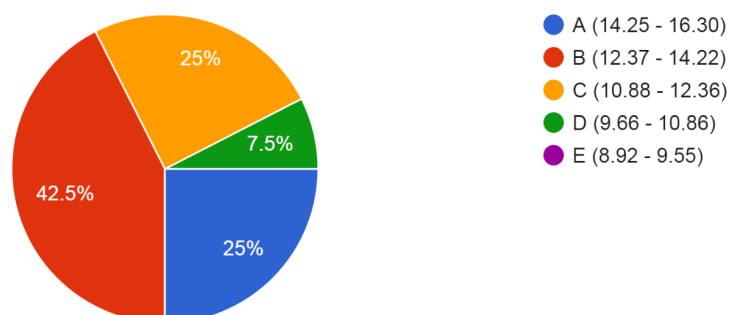
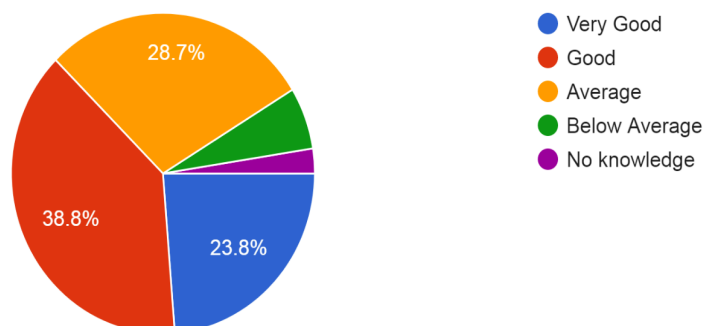


Figure 3.4 showcases that the largest portion of respondents (42.5%) indicated their achievement to be at the “B” level. While 25% of the sample belong to the “A” class. The present findings demonstrate that a large majority of the students have sufficient language competences to take on complex linguistic features. These results should also reflect reasonably truthful results of the previous question, and reduce biases and any disproportionate self-assessment in the language proficiency rating process.

Question Six: Please rate your knowledge (what you know) about the English language CULTURE.

Figure 3.5

Students' Knowledge of Target Culture



The findings show that a large proportion of the sample (91.3%) have judged their knowledge of the English culture to be average and/or above (good and very good). These results are to be expected when referring to the previous data from figures 3.4 and 3.3 that demonstrate above-average language proficiency and academic achievement, of which cultural knowledge is an essential component in developing the required communicative competences. Students would enhance their cultural knowledge and strengthen their mastery of the foreign language cultural representations and awareness through active classroom engagement in different courses, such as

Culture and Civilisation courses, Literature Courses, Oral Expression Courses, throughout their undergraduate and postgraduate education. In addition, students would use the target language outside the classroom in leisure activities. This fact would enrich their cultural experience and develop their cultural awareness.

Question Seven: Do you use English outside the classroom?

Figure 3.6

English Language Use Outside the Classroom

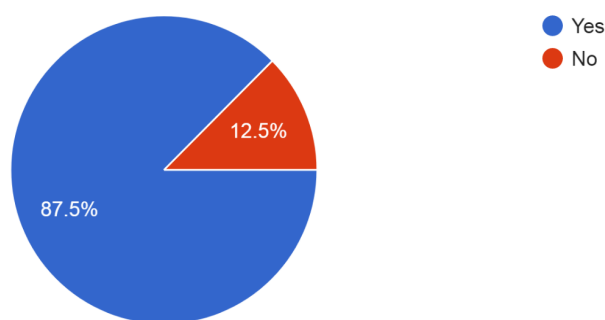
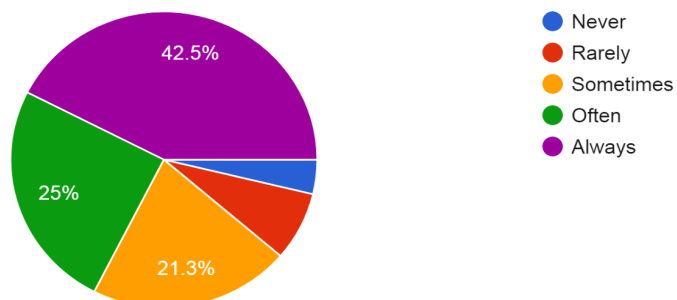


Figure 3.6 indicates that a vast majority of the students (87.5%) are using English outside the classroom environment, while a small minority of 12.5% declared their abstinence from using English beyond the classroom grounds. The usage of a foreign language outside of the classroom improves learners' control of the language by enabling them to apply their newly acquired language skills to action. Simultaneously, it enhances specific competencies such as communicative, pragmatic, and strategic skills, all of which would contribute to their communicative competence in general, and humour competency, in particular.

Question Eight: How often do you use English (speaking to people; reading books, news, and social media posts; writing, texting friends, and posting on social media; or listening and watching) outside the classroom?

Figure 3.7

Frequency of English Language Use Outside the Classroom



88.8% of the participants uses the English language with an above-average frequency, with 67.5% of them using it often to always. Contrastively, only 7.5% and 3.8% described their use as “rarely” and “never”, respectively. This question assesses students' use of language outside the classroom which is an indication of their exposure to the target language and culture. The latter is an important aspect in improving their intercultural communicative competence. A follow-up question aims at investigating the media that students rely on the most in their use of English outside the classroom.

Question Nine: What media do you use the most? (Don't tick the ones you don't use)

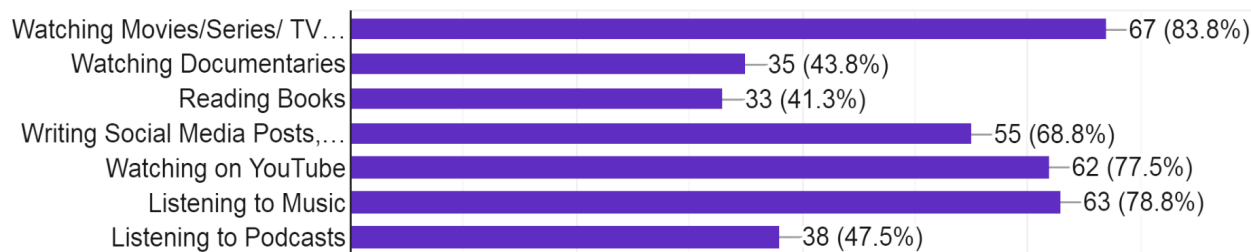
Figure 3.8*Media Preference for Language Use*

Figure 3.8 demonstrates some overall consistency in the media preferences that students' have shown to have regarding their use of English. The most notable of them is "Watching Movies/Series/TV Shows", "Listening to Music", and "Watching on YouTube" with 83.8%, 78.8%, and 77.5%, respectively. Additionally, respondents show that a remarkable portion of them (68.8%) produce in English "Writing Social Media Posts, Comments, or Chats" option. These results are foreseen considering the relentless spread of "English" in the world. It has become the common denominator linking a vast majority of people around the world, due to USA's rise as the dominant superpower and culture. Hence, the English language is now spoken by over three hundred million people worldwide. It is also the dominant language of daily life interactions through social media, the internet, and television (see Mikanowski, 2018). According to Lech and Harris, "...language skills emerge from participation in usage events, it is imperative that a user is exposed to opportunities for such events to occur." (2019, p. 43). The scholars highlight that these opportunities can be met when the foreign language users engage actively in activities such as blogging and social media interactions (posts, comments, chats, etc.), as in passive activities such as watching movies, shows, and listening to music. Be it active or passive, such activities provide opportunities for exposure to the language in "its natural,

organic version” (p.43). Being the case, these authentic materials offer their users a chance to immerse themselves in the target language and culture without going anywhere.

Question 10: What are the difficulties you usually face when you communicate with or when you are exposed to materials in English? (You can choose more than one answer).

Figure 3.9

Self-Reported Communication Difficulties



Responses show that “Misunderstandings/misinterpretations due to lack of knowledge about social and cultural aspects”, and “linguistic difficulties(vocabulary shortage, difficult grammatical structure, etc.)” are problematic to 36.3% and 35% of the students, respectively. The first issue stems from the students’ poor sociolinguistic competence and lack of interest in developing knowledge of the target language culture. As for the linguistic difficulties, this translates to some hindrance associated with the learners’ linguistic competence, together with complex linguistic and meta-linguistic variables of the language use and understanding (see Shi & Li, 2019). Moreover, the findings have shown a plausible proportion of the students have selected the option “The material triggers negative emotions in you, distracts you, or you do not relate”. The previous facet is usually considered to be related to students' emotional intelligence and their ability to control their feelings and weave through language difficulties to achieve the

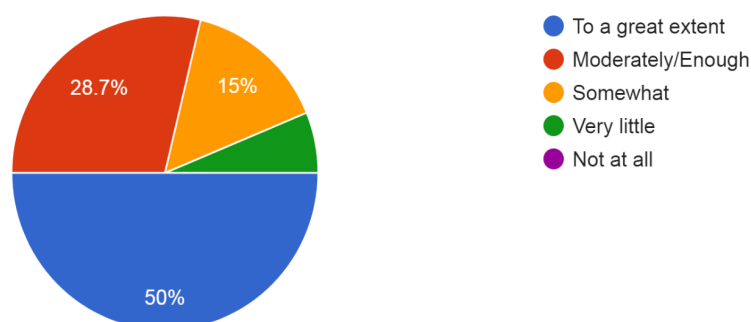
best results in language learning (see Zafari & Biria, 2014). The results also show a considerable (27.5%) of the participants have related to and chosen the option of “Biases, stereotypes, and prejudices”. Students also have demonstrated another type of cultural barrier specifically in the *ethnographic* approach, which LaRay M. Barna (1997) has devised into *ethnocentrism*, *stereotypes*, *biases* and *cultural nearsightedness*. The previous elements entail viewing, judging, and only considering elements of another culture adversely based on one's own cultural standards (see Barna, 1997).

Section Three: Humour, Culture, and Language.

Question 11: Do you enjoy consuming (watching/reading/ listening to) humorous materials?

Figure 3.10

Students' Attitudes toward Humour Consumption



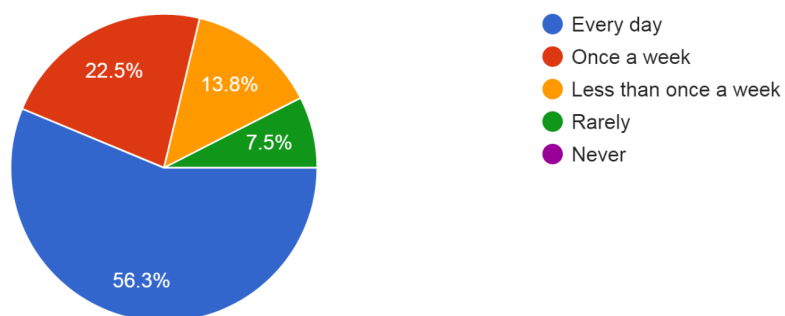
The above figure displays that the significant majority of the students (78.7%) truly enjoy humorous materials, which (50%) of them do to a great extent. Such results are predictable for the importance of laughter in human life. Laughter enables individuals to blow off steam or release pent-up “psychic energy” (chapter 1, p. 13). This mechanism as claimed in the *Release*

Theory, as discussed in chapter 1, reveals why people may be amused by stigmatised lowbrow and sexual themes, as well as humour that highlights problematic social and racial issues.

Question Twelve: How often do you consume humorous materials?

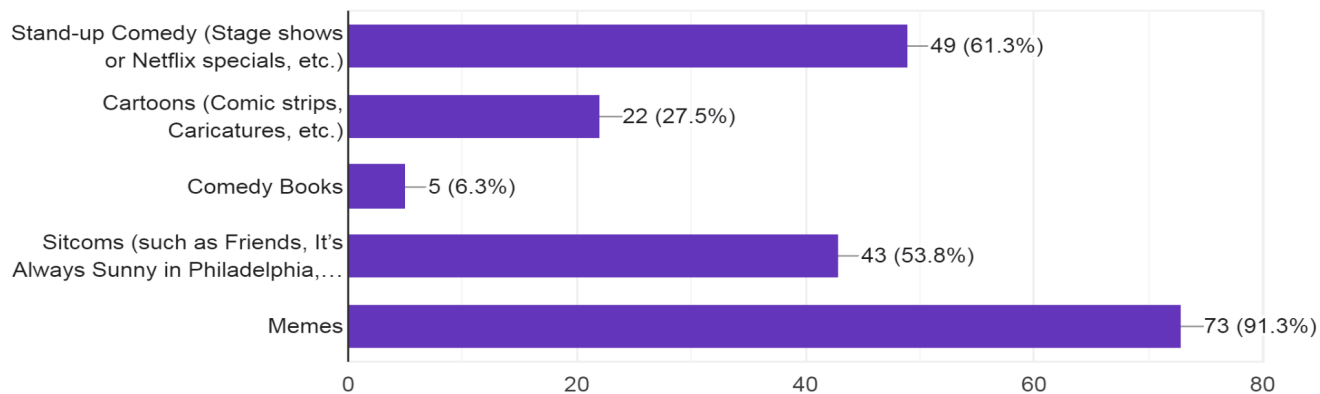
Figure 3.11

Frequency of Humour Consumption



The responses, as shown in figure 3.11, go along with Freud's claim and the Release Theory. The figure illustrates that over half of the students (56.3%) consume humour "Every single day", while 25.% of them reported that they do it "Once a week". These findings can be vindicated due to their effortless accessibility. Individuals rapidly turn to humour as their preferred genre, for a variety of reasons: it gives emotional support to young people (see Walters, 2020); humour has become widespread in all aspects of our daily life, from psychology), advertisement, politics, and its accessibility through the internet.

Question Thirteen: Which medium do you prefer when it comes to consuming humour? (you can choose more than one)

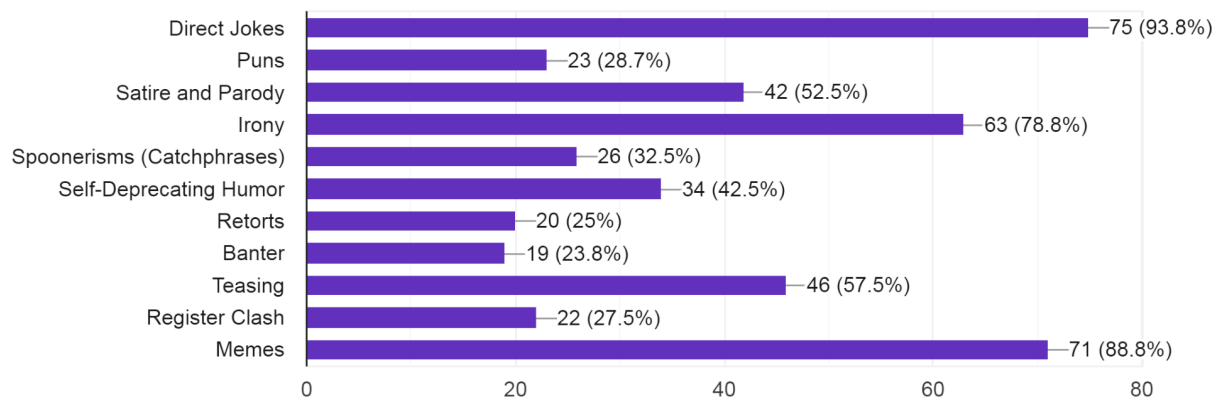
Figure 3.12*Media Preference for Humour Consumption*

From students' responses exhibited in figure 3.12, we can infer that "Memes" is the most popular humorous medium, being one of the preferred media by 91.3% of the participants. Memes are products of participatory digital culture in which their use grew rapidly with easy access to the internet and social media. The latter is what characterises Gen Y and Gen Z to which the participants of this study belong. They are a genre, not a medium, of online communication. They are quickly distributed online, particularly through online social networks. In summary, memes are repurposed and replicated ideas that circulate quickly among individuals of participatory digital culture (chapter 1, p. 23). Some even express mental health difficulties like depression and anxiety, as well as current political situations some of which are upsetting (see Taylor, 2017). Their form makes the meme's joke simple and easy to grasp, relate to, and share. Such a simple form can communicate with any generation. Similarly, "Stand-up Comedy" and "Sitcoms" are seen to be popular with a large portion of participants (61.3% and 53.8%, respectively) choosing them as one of their preferred media of humour.

Question Fourteen: Which of these types of humour do you recognise (KNOW)? (you can choose more than one).

Figure 3.13

Recognizable Types of Humour

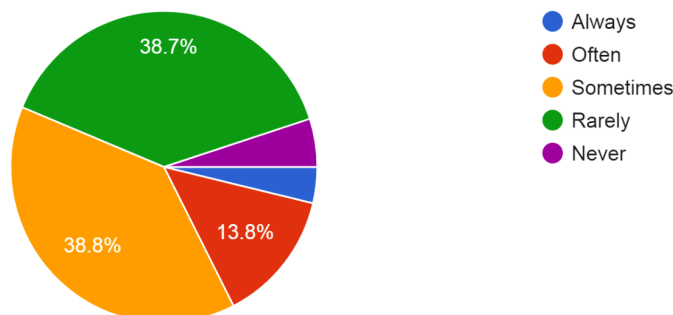


The results shown in the figure above, demonstrate that almost all participants (93.8%) know “Direct Jokes” since various forms of humour are universal. As a matter of a fact, “Memes” are the second most recognisable type of humour according to 88.8% of the students' responses. “Irony” is the third most recognized type of humour with 78.8%, according to the results shown in figure 3.13. *Irony* is known for its criterion of boosting the 'virality' of a message by improving its distinction, memorability, and aesthetics. (see Pehlivan et al., 2013).

Question Fifteen: How often do you fail to understand the language used in humorous materials?

Figure 3.14

Frequency of Difficulties in Understanding Humour's Language

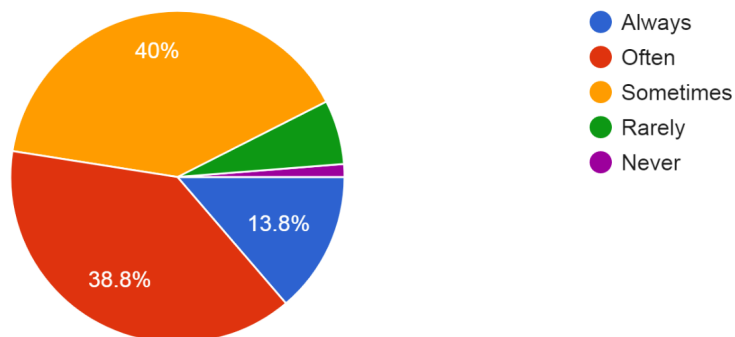


The data illustrated in figure 3.14 show that 43.7% of the respondents do not usually fail to understand the linguistic content of humorous materials, with 5% claiming that they “Never” do, and 38.7% do “Rarely”). However, 38.8% of the respondents have an average frequency in facing linguistic difficulties to grasp the humour, while 13.8% of the respondents “Often” do. Also, a very small minority of 3.8% seem to “Always” face linguistic difficulties. Linguistic difficulties occurring when exposed to humorous content are associated with ELLs’ language proficiency, which showed that students’ self-perceived language proficiency is consistent with the present results. As already shown in chapter 2, that lexically dense and linguistically complex humour poses a challenge for EFL learners, while humour that relies on simple structure and narrative is easily understood and appreciated.

Question sixteen: How often do you grasp the cultural references and nuances (social norms, economic situation, historical events, or figures..) embedded in the humorous texts?

Figure 3.15

Students' Ability to Understand Culture embedded in Humour



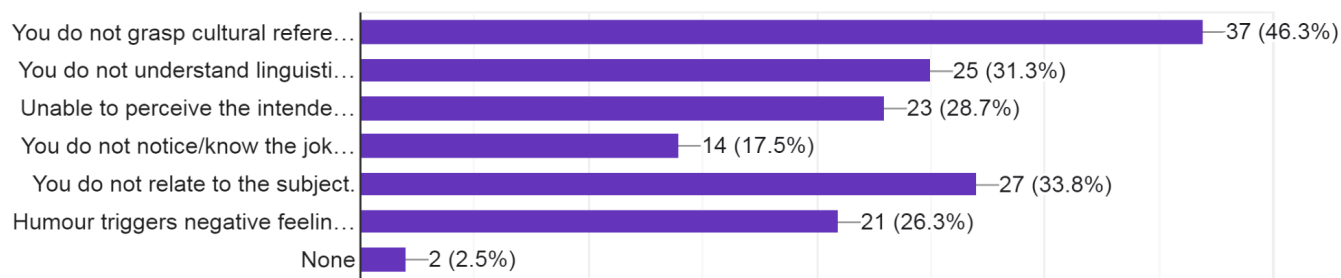
In any speech community, language and culture evolve and change together, influencing one another. The fact explains the close and reciprocal relationship between language and culture. Consequently, culture-bound expressions and cultural references come up very often in spoken and written text. On the ground of this, question 16 aimed at evaluating students' *intercultural competence* and their ability in identifying cultural references when exposed to humorous text in the TL. Figure 3.15 indicates that a large proportion of the students (52%) are adequately able to grasp the cultural nuances in humorous text to varying degrees. The latter is a self-assessed ability by the participants as they carry this sentiment, which probably stays in the realm of surface-level culture, since this expert level of cultural recognition would only be possible by natives of the culture, in addition to culture experts and humour experts to some extent (see Reimann, 2010). Additionally, 40% of the responses show that students demonstrate a fair degree of grasping the cultural references present in humour. This data show consistent levels with prior self-reported information about participants' knowledge of the TL's culture. In contrast, a minuscule segment of participants (7.5%) showed to "Rarely" or "Never" grasp the cultural

nuances in humorous materials. Individuals who might not engage with or have no knowledge or interest in the TL's culture face difficulties in grasping the cultural nuggets and feeling included in the audience of the humour.

Question Seventeen: What are the difficulties you face in understanding humorous materials?
(you can choose more than one)

Figure 3.16

Students' Difficulties in Understanding Humorous Materials



Understanding the language of the humorous material and grasping the cultural references embedded are not the only barriers to the perception and appreciation of humour. Wherefore, question 17 was added to elicit data about other challenges that face individuals when exposed to humour. According to figure 6.15, “grasping cultural references” is still the most problematic challenge to (46.3%) of the students. The latter refers to *cultural barriers*, reflecting a lack of *socio-cultural literacy* when exposed to the TL humour, which renders the students unable to neither understand nor appreciate it. “Not relating to the subject” came second, being problematic to (33.8%) of the students. The notion of *ethnocentrism* plays some part in this case. The participants, just like all people, internalise cultural beliefs, and their views are moulded by their own culture. As a result, one's perception of humour represents some kind of ethnic prejudice (see Martin, 2018). Prior research has shown that humour does not really travel well

across cultures. Western and Eastern have different opinions and views on humour and on which topics, themes, and subjects, they are more likely to engage with (see Jiang et al., 2019).

While both the options of “You do not understand linguistic aspect” and “Unable to perceive the intended/hidden meaning of the language” have garnered almost the same amount of votes (31.3% and 28.7%, consecutively) they refer to distinct barriers. The first one refers strictly to the student’s *linguistic competence*, while the second refers to the *pragmatic* one, specifically represented by possible *pragmatic failure*. Both elements stipulate linguistic and meta-linguistic challenges that hinder ELL when disseminating the communicated message through humour. Students’ *pragmatic competence* has a plausible influence on their ability to understand jokes in the FL.

Furthermore, the “Humour triggers negative feelings in you” option refers to *emotional* and *psychological* barriers to understanding humour. The latter accumulated 26.3% of the students’ votes as a recurring obstacle to them. According to the Theory of Release, *emotional engagement* is necessary for individuals when they are exposed to humour. It is the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and convey one's own and others' emotions in essence to influence thought and action that effectively copes with contextual demands and pressures (see Mayer et al., 2008). The data also shows a small percentage (17.5%) relate their difficulties to their inability to recognise the joke’s structure and template.

Question Eighteen: Which subject matter does not seem to be humorous to you? (you can choose more than one).

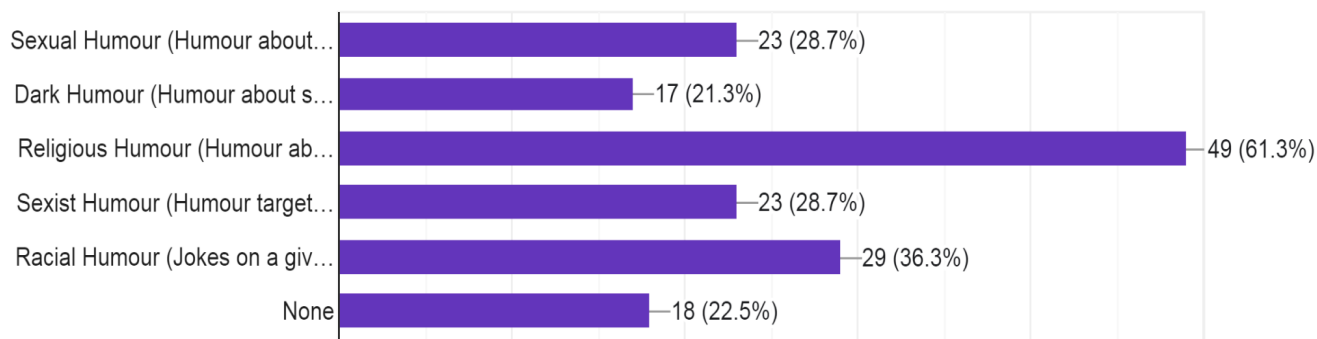
Figure 3.17*Students' Problematic Humour Themes/Genres*

Figure 3.17 identifies “Religious Humour” to be the less appreciated type of humour to 61.3% of the students’ responses. Followed by “Racial humour” which seems not to be funny to 36.3% of the participants. While “Sexual Humour”, “Sexist Humour” and “Dark Humour” are claimed to be controversial topics of humour to relatively close percentages of the respondents with 28.7%, 28.7% and 21.3%, respectively. These findings can be inferred from the cultural differences in humour perception and humour use between Western and Eastern cultures. While Western cultures are at ease with tackling and attacking controversial and taboo topics through humour, Eastern cultures, and Algerian culture, in particular, are more reserved and their collective sense of humour results in a degree of censorship due to their social and cultural norms (see Chiaro, 2009). Moreover, Easterners do not have the same favourable outlook on humour as their Western counterparts. Easterners, compared to Westerners, are less prone to employ humour as a way to reduce stress as a result of this view. The aforementioned claims are validated by the students’ comments on the questionnaire and test left in question 19.

Question Nineteen: Leave below any comment you have.

This question was added so students could be able to add further input to the research or any aspect of the questionnaire or test. Accordingly, some of the comments worth reporting are the following:

“Concerning the last question, it's not that religious humour does not seem to be funny. I believe the power of comedy is that it can take anything and turn it into something really humorous.. the funniest jokes are always taboo-related. But when you actually believe in the verse that says «ولئن سألتهم ليقولن إنما كنا نخوض ونلعب، قل أباالله وآياته ورسوله كنتم تستهزئون، لا تعتذروا قد كفرتم» «بعد إيمانكم»، you [will] feel called out, and eventually the feeling of concern overwhelms the feeling of humour”. This comment provides the typical reflection of an Algerian ELL when facing English humour, while he/she can be open enough to recognize or appreciate the humour, his/her religious morals contradict that sentiment.

“It may seem as a negative feedback but I did not like or better say react well to the comedian who spoke about God and how he blamed God”. The latter input shows the participants’ disapproval of the “religious” joke, made in Material 15 and his/her inability to enjoy or appreciate it.

3.4.3. Correlation Analyses of Questionnaire Results

3.4.3.1 Identification and Description of the Variables

The variables in the questionnaire were refined further in an attempt to investigate if there was a correlation, or not, connecting *Self-perceived proficiency*, and *knowledge about the target language culture*, with *linguistic difficulties*, and *ability to recognise cultural references*, respectively, as a first fold. The second is exploring the existence of an association between *attitudes toward humour consumption*, and (1) *self-perceived language proficiency*, and (2) *cultural knowledge*. The reasons behind adopting these variables are due to the questionnaire’s

data reporting cultural and linguistic difficulties as overwhelmingly prevalent challenges for students when consuming humour (see figure 3.15).

3.4.3.2 Correlation Test Results.

The data were analysed using bivariate Spearman's rank-order correlation. SPSS software was used to calculate these statistics. On these selected factors, Spearman's correlation was used to evaluate the association between (1) self-perceived language proficiency, (2) cultural knowledge, (3) linguistic difficulties, and (4) ability to recognise cultural references. Ordinal data for the study is collected using five-point Likert scales. Non-parametric methods such as Spearman's rank-order correlation are preferred for determining the degree of association between ordinal variables.

To examine the association between cultural knowledge and the ability to recognise cultural references, a Spearman's correlation was performed. The first was evidenced to be strongly and positively correlated with the ability to recognise cultural references ($r = 0.618$), which was statistically significant as $\rho = 0.001$ ($\rho < 0.01$). In the same vein, a Spearman's correlation test was conducted to investigate students' *self-perceived language proficiency* and *failing to understand linguistic difficulties* and the findings show ($r = -0.311$) with a significant value at $\rho = 0.005$ ($\rho < 0.01$). The latter indicates a negative correlation, which denotes that as one variable (which is learners' language proficiency level) increases, the other (which is failing to understand the language used in humour) is prone to decrease. On account of the aforementioned test results, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, students' higher levels of proficiency and knowledge about the target language culture accommodate and facilitate their perception of English humorous texts.

The second phase of the testing included probing into a possible correlation between attitudes toward humour consumption and language proficiency. Consequently, administering a Spearman correlation test demonstrated a moderately positive correlation ($r = 0.528$), statistically significant as $\rho = 0.001$ ($\rho < 0.01$). Moreover, students' *attitudes toward humour consumption* also showed a moderately positive correlation with their *cultural knowledge* ($r = 0.523$) via a significant margin as $\rho = 0.001$ ($\rho < 0.01$).

3.4.4. Discussion and Summary of the Questionnaire Results and Findings

The findings of the students' questionnaire analysis assist and add significance to the present study. Initially, students showed great degrees of familiarity and exposure to humour, represented by the high frequency of their humour consumption which is consistent with their elevated levels of enjoyment of this type of discourse. In addition, the data also demonstrated that *memes*, as a medium, are the most commonly employed and recognised among the students which is consistent with prior research on the virality and universality of the *meme culture* within this age range (to which our sample belongs to). While *Stand-up comedy* and *Sitcoms* are still popular among our research population, yet not to the same degree *memes* are, due to their quick and efficient manner of delivering the humour, its spread and the ease of its consumption.

Moreover, *direct jokes* have been reported by the students to be the most recognisable and known type of humour, due to their simple structure and its predominant application in everyday conversational humour. Whereas, *memes*, as a type or a genre of humour, hold second place for being the most used and recognised genre by the students' age range.

Similarly, the prevalence of *irony* among our sample's age range as a tool for psychological relief and as a coping mechanism to handle stress and turbulent mental health issues is affirmed. The data (see figure 3.14) exhibited that the students' levels of *linguistic competence* are

adequate when it comes to understanding the linguistic features of humorous materials. Similarly, they have also reported high degrees of *intercultural communicative competence*, in their ability to disseminate and grasp the cultural schemes, nuances and references of the humorous texts. However, the inquisition aimed at common difficulties in understanding humour revealed that cultural challenges in grasping the references and nuances present in the humour, (such as recognising historical figures, events, social traditions or an interpersonal framework of the TL's culture), in addition to *linguistic and meta-linguistic difficulties* are still the most relevant obstacles that students face in their humour comprehension. The previous facet can be the result of students' vocabulary shortage, their inability to recognise some grammatical structures, or when the material uses different vernaculars, accents, or unknown terminology. More importantly, is the difficulty in detecting the ludicrous by going beyond the linguistic to reach the pragmatic.

Other prominent difficulties divulged by the questionnaire findings are exemplified by the participants' inability to relate to the subject of the humour, i.e., lack of interest or intrigue to dabble in different genres and humour of different cultures, that stems from a sense of *ethnocentrism* in which the individual sits in his comfort bubble, unable to connect with the others.

Also, a sizable portion of the students' reported emotional barriers limiting their ability to understand humorous content. The latter is exhibited when humour triggers negative emotions and feelings within the individual rendering them unable to appreciate it. Additionally, it can also include the students' inability to emotionally engage with the humour, i.e., factoring in one's feelings while consuming humour through emotional management and regulation to avoid the influence of feelings on thought.

Finally, the students' results displayed an apparent repulsion towards humour that indulges in taboo topics, such as *religious*, *racial*, *sexist*, *dark* and *sexual* humour. Notably, *religious humour* was shown to be the most frowned upon of the bunch due to the religious heritage of the participants and their beliefs regarding humour relating to that. Consequently, sexual humour can also fall under the same scheme of religious beliefs, but also under the social convention of the Algerian community, in which sexual subjects are looked down on and often avoided. Effectively, *racial*, *dark* and *sexist* humour has seen a lot of criticism in recent years, due to the spread of the "Woke" culture and "Cancel" culture, which aims at censoring comedians and provocative humour under the banner of "punching down on the oppressed", hence why people remove themselves and avoid any topic that tackles racial issues, dark subjects or make jokes about women.

Correspondingly, the different correlation tests' results revealed a positive association between ELLs level of proficiency and their ability in understanding humorous materials in the foreign language. Moreover, a strong positive association was attested between their knowledge of the target language culture and their ability to recognise references included in humour. In addition, the second set of correlation tests showed that students' attitudes toward humour consumption have a positive correlation with their language proficiency and cultural knowledge. The latter signifies that attitudes toward humour consumption also correlate to their ability to recognise cultural references and to understand the linguistic and the pragmatic levels of humorous materials.

3.5. The Humour Test

3.5.1. Description of the Humour Test

To meet the aims of the study, qualitative, semantic and discourse, analyses are required to examine the script(s), the Knowledge Resources, and the context of the test's humorous materials. The test is comprised of a sixteen-item list of humorous materials vary between: 8 pictures that include 6 memes and 2 canned jokes, and 8 short clips (divided into three elements; 8 short clips (40 seconds to 1 minute) that include 4 stand-up comedies, 1 you laugh you lose challenge show, 1 Comedy Central Roast, 1 Saturday Night Live and 1 Filthy Frank Show clip. All items were collected and acquired from authentic sources of the target language and culture. Furthermore, each material is followed by two questions, the first seeks to examine students' ability to understand the language used in the material, while the second aims to evaluate their appreciation of the humour.

The authenticity of the materials was an important factor when constructing the test to ensure the genuineness of the responses, hence the materials were taken from accessible and everyday life sources (social media posts, stand-up comedy clips, YouTube, etc). The utilised materials included tackles a myriad of subjects including: 1) *Racial Humour*, 2) *Sexual Humour*, 3) *Sexist Humour*, 4) *Template Humour*, 5) *Roast Humour*, 6) *Cultural Humour*, 7) *Religious Humour*, 8) *Satirical Humour*, and 9) *Wordplay*. Moreover, these subjects include different forms of humour, such as: direct jokes, puns, irony and satire, spoonerisms, memetics, banter, teasing, wordplay, self-deprecation, parody, and register clash (see chapter 1).

3.5.2. Analysis of the Humour Test findings

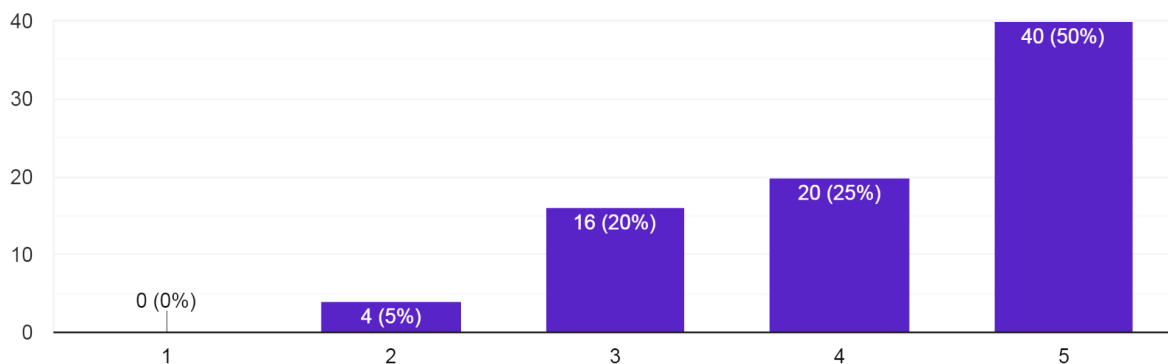
Material One:

The first humorous material used in the test is from a show by the South African stand-up comedian Trevor Noah. The comedian elicits the *British audience's* laughter by commenting humorously on *the history of the British colonisation of Africa*. He says, “Flying to the UK is a lot of stress, you have one of the most stressful border controls I’ve ever come into in my life. They ask you so many questions, question upon question upon question...at one point I stopped and said, “look man, look man, I’ve given you the paperwork, I’ve told you why I’m here, why don’t you believe me?” And he said (British accent), “Well, we can’t just believe everybody that comes into the UK, we can’t just believe that you're gonna do what you say you are here to do, that doesn’t make sense. You might do something totally different.” I was like “Fair enough, fair enough, that makes sense. I just wish as Africans, we’d thought of that when the British arrived. [the audience burst into laughter]. It’d serve us well.” (African accent), “Hey buddy, what’s that flag for.” (18th-century antiquated British accent), “Oh, we are just going to wave it in your country.” (African accent), “Yeah, come on in [cheerful].” [Audience burst into laughter]

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.18

The Degree of Understanding of Material 1 Language Content



As figure 3.18 indicates the vast majority of the respondents 75% (50% perfectly, 25% almost completely) were able to understand the linguistic content of the present material that was *simple* and *clear*. The material is *audiovisual* humour in which the ludicrous is dependent on “*referential humour*” (Ritchie, 2010) that emerges from the story/event of the British colonisation of South Africa; and when the comedian ends it with the *punchline* that enables the audience *to oppose the main script (tight border controls) to the secondary script (British settlers arrival in Africa)*. In addition, the humour also depends on non-verbal elements that emerge from the tone of the voice (cheerful) and changing accents (current British accent, antiquated British accent, African accent).

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.19

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 1 Humour

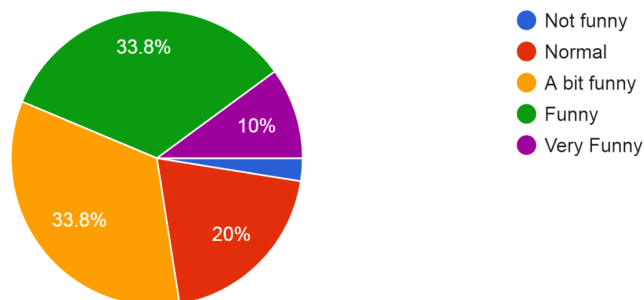


Figure 3.19 shows that the majority of the respondents found the material to be funny to varying degrees (10% found the material to be very funny, 33.8% thought that it was funny, and 33.8% found it a bit funny). Such results stem from the fact that the *understanding* and *recognition* of the linguistic and metalinguistic aspects of the joke entails a degree of *appreciation* of the funniness (see Hay, 2001). However, considering again the portion of the respondents who rated the material as a “bit funny” (33.8%) and the one who rated it as “normal” (20%), it is fair to say that a significant portion (53.8%) showed lower levels of appreciation. To analyse these results, it will be likely to consider the cultural barriers. Unlike the audience of the time who was British, and who could relate to the event/story, the respondents of the study come from a different culture which made it hard for them to get emotionally engaged in the humour.

Material Two

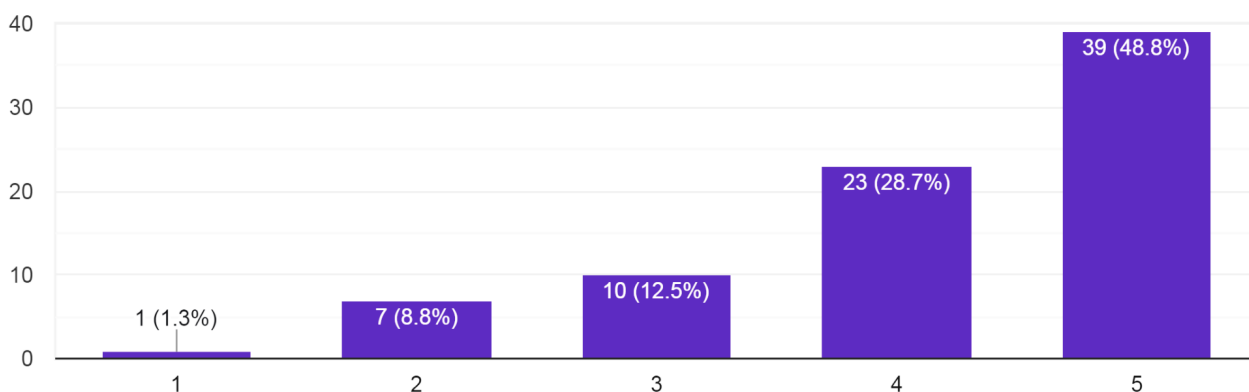
The second humorous material is an example of a known template *meme* called “tHe MoCkInG sPonGeBoB”. The text of the material is about a common interaction between a student and a professor in a context where the student is failing the class and asking for extra

credit. However, the professor's response uses "alternating caps" which is also known as "Spongebob case." The latter is a technique that uses a random capitalisation in text messages to convey a mocking tone. The text that represents the professor's utterance is distorted using random capitalisation to reflect a mocking tone, drawing on an ironic effect in the conversation.

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.20

The Degree of Understanding of Material 2 Language Content



The humorous material 2 uses very simple and clear words and structures. As a result, most of the respondents 72.5% could understand it (with 28.7% and 48.8% could understand it almost completely and completely, respectively.) as shown in figure 3.3. Yet, a small portion of the students demonstrated a minor difficulty to no ability understanding the text with 8.8% and 1.3% respectively.

Students' responses to this material found consistent rates of comprehension, owing to the language's clarity and their experience with social media and internet culture humour, in addition to the 'universality' of memes. Memes are particularly prominent among *millennials* since they

provide a sentiment of unity and belonging to the same group/generation that extends beyond physical connections.

In addition, the Narrative Strategy (NS) KR, displayed in the material as a common theme for this type of humour (Memes), falls into the most common phrasal patterns, in which there is constantly a dialogue involving two characters, someone else and “me” (*To Engage Gen Z, Make Them Laugh*, 2020, para. 2). Accordingly, this joke’s recognition and appreciation are pertinent to Generation Y and Generation Z populations.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.21

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 2 Humour

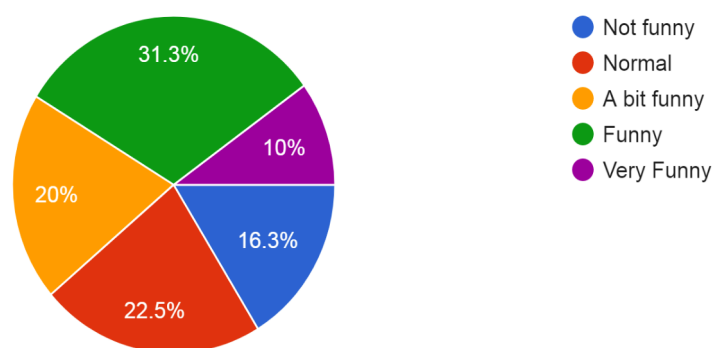


Figure 3.21 reveals that above half of the respondents 61.3 % (49) thought the content was humorous to varying degrees (10%, 31.3 %, and 20% of the respondents indicated that the content was very funny, funny, and a bit funny, respectively). Extrapolating the GTVH (the General Theory of Verbal Humour) on the current material raises the SI KR (the Situation Knowledge Resource) that represents the context in which the joke takes place. The context of

the material presents a plausible scenario for this research's population (2nd year Master students) to relate to.

However, varying degrees of humour appreciation results show a reasonable distribution of reactions when considering individual differences in sense and style of humour. As for the less appreciation of the humour by a small proportion of the respondents, it may originate from their unfamiliarity with this type of humour structure (Mocking *Spongebob Meme*), or their inability to detect the incongruous situation created by the parody factor present in the humour.

Material 3

The current material is the type of “You laugh you lose challenge”, in which two participants exchange dad jokes to see who breaks first. The first participant states: “My wife told me to be more in touch with my feminine side. So, I crashed the car [Both participants burst into laughter]. Then I ignored her all day for no reason [Laughter]. The current joke borders on sexist (misogynistic) humour.

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.22

The Degree of Understanding of Material 3 Language Content

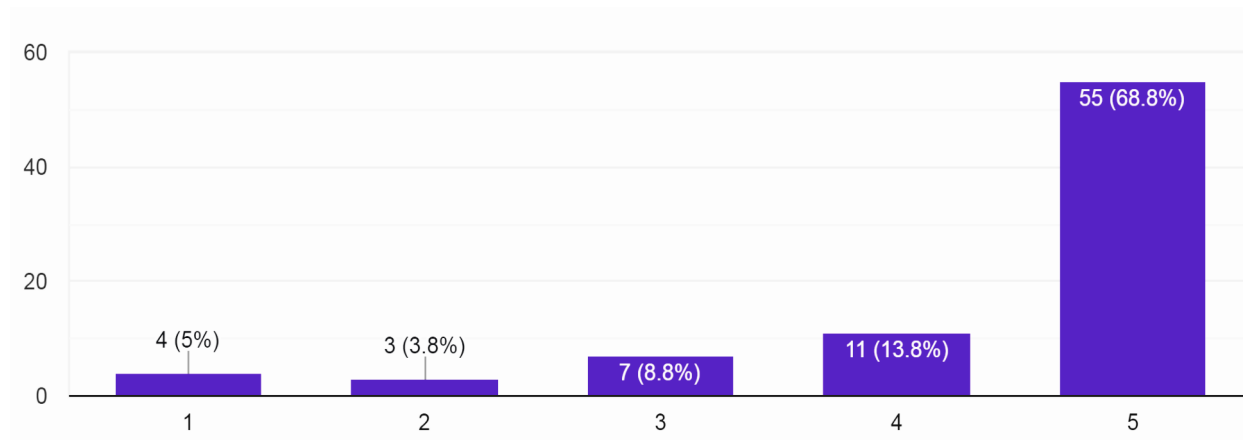


Figure 3.22 exhibits a high degree of understanding of the material’s language content with a majority of 82.6% who could understand it completely or almost completely. The latter results are due to the *clear* and *simple* language employed. Add to that, the *audiovisual* material is accompanied by subtitles. By reflecting the Theory of Incongruity, this pun uses the phrase “*feminine side*”, which serves as the “*incongruous factor*”. The phrase commonly refers to “being in touch with one’s feelings and expressing them”. However, the *punchline* is played into the expectation of the receiver, presenting stereotypes instead of the expected connotation. The first stereotype draws on women being bad drivers, “so I crashed the car”, and the second one draws on women getting fussy and moody, by saying “Then I ignored her all day for no reason”; to *oppose* the expected *resolution*.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.23

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 3 Humour

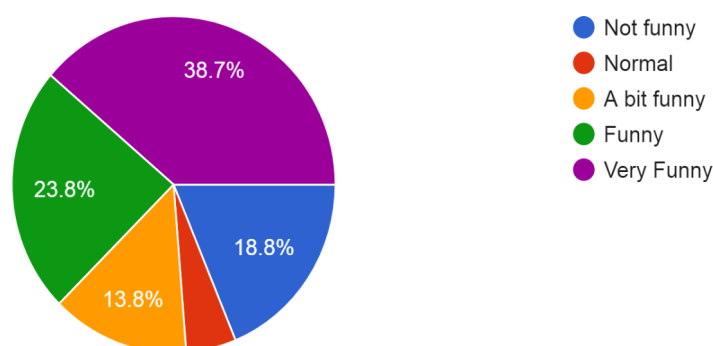


Figure 3.23 reported that more than half of the responders (76.3%) regarded the material as funny in different ways with (62.5%) of the respondents judged the substance to be really funny (funny and very funny). Drawing inferences through the *GTVH* onto this material, students' results reveal steady levels of *appreciation*, attributed to the *Narrative Strategy* (NS) KR utilised

in the material is a *simple narrative*. The latter enables the audience to read through the *Script Opposition* in the comedic content and figure out which script is intended (Attardo, 1994). Similarly, the *Logical Mechanism* (LM) KR aided in the audience's accumulated *anticipation* before the unveiling of the SO KR through the *punchline*. Moreover, a minor part of the participants 23.8%, who failed to appreciate the material, might have found complications with this form of humour (puns) since these learners can have little knowledge of the expression “*Feminine Side*”, which is a piece of the English culture (Alnamer, 2017). This lack of awareness can divert their attention far from the joke's punchline, resulting in a misunderstanding or delayed understanding. Furthermore, the students' low appreciation in this case, may stem from their sensitivity towards “Sexist” humour as seen before through the questionnaire's data, since the butt of the present humour targets female stereotypes.

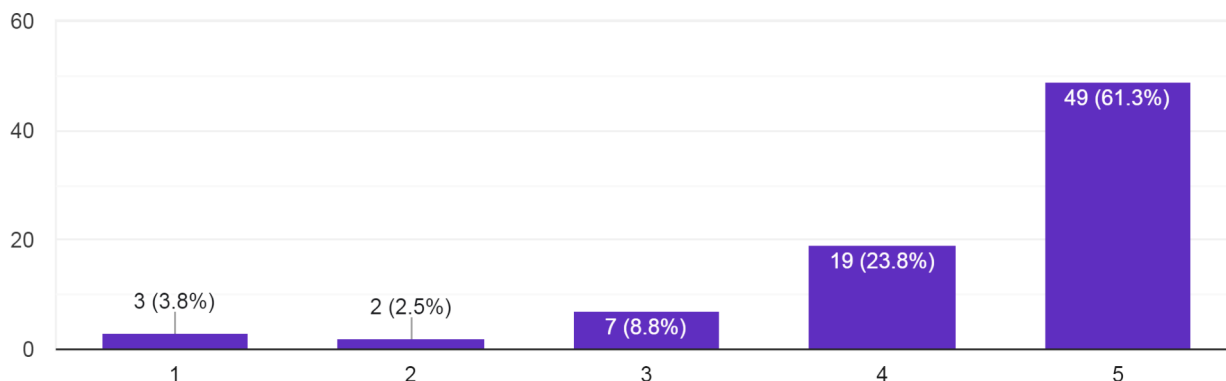
Material 4

This material is a meme template that belongs to the *Wordplay* type of humour, employed through a *meme template* as the medium. The template/structure of this *meme* is called “conversational tweets”, which includes a conversation between two or more participants, with “me” as a recurring participant. The context of the material's conversation occurs between “me” and “date”; i.e., a first date interaction. The *date* starts the conversation by saying “So what do you do?” and *me* responds with “I own a mining business”, *date* asks “what do you mine” and *me* replies with “I mine my own fu**ing business”.

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.24

The Degree of Understanding of Material 4 Language Content



As indicated by the data shown in figure 3.24, we distinguish that most of the participants have high degrees of success in *understanding* the material’s language. Accordingly, a major portion of 85.1% understood the material’s linguistic features. These findings can be linked to the audience’s familiarity with the structure of this *meme* (“conversational tweets”). The *meme* revolves around a relatable context and uses very simple language with no complex vocabulary or structure. Template memes are often constant in terms of structure and with only minor changes to the content, which makes the language components recurring yet the change is often to the context and characters. However, a small group of respondents faced difficulties in understanding the material. The barrier to understanding might be due to their unfamiliarity with social media culture and/or this meme structure/type. To the same degree, it might stem from missing the *pragmatic role* of *wordplay*. Accordingly, this type’s structure relies on ambiguous or distorted linguistic features and its message is essentially related to the actualisation of its “*pragmatic role*”. It features a clever *punchline* with *overlapping* and *opposing scripts*, which are displayed in the play on the *Homophony* between the word “*mine*” and “*mind*”. The speaker

uses the latter technique to create *ambiguity* and *intrigue*, which both serve as a sense of *incongruity* for the listener prior to the reveal of the “*incongruous resolution*” in the *punchline*.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.25

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 4 Humour

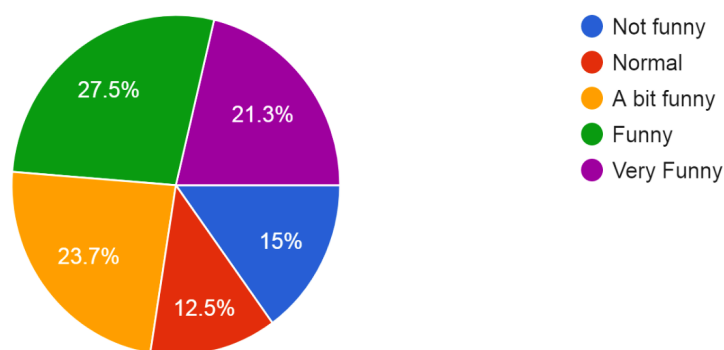


Figure 3.25 illustrates that the majority of the participants (72.5%) found the material to be of varying degrees of funniness. We can infer a reciprocal link between the high degrees of *understanding* with the elevated degrees of *appreciation* as already discussed. Furthermore, Altakhaineh & Alnamer (2019) present through their findings that some EFL students might not consider the distinguishable differences in the phonological features of some English words, and usually follow the logical flow of ideas. Accordingly, the *Logical Mechanism* (LM) and *Situation* (SI) metrics aided in leading the listener to the *incongruity* through the intentional creation of *ambiguous* elements under the right *context*. The small minority (15%) that found the material to be “Not Funny”, might have faced hardships in identifying the joke structure, or possibly due to pragmatic failure when disseminating *the punning*.

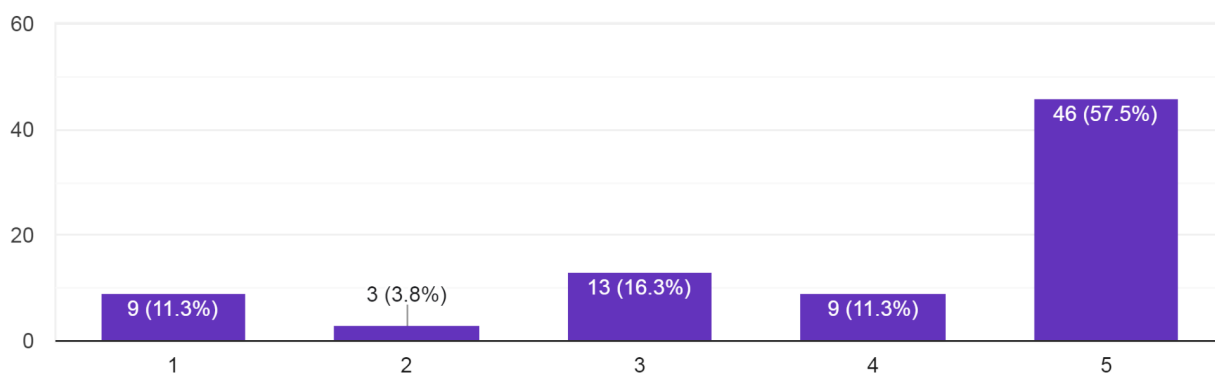
Material 5

The material shows two opposing pictures of Jesus, A juxtaposition is present here in which one of the images displays a “painting” while the other displays “a human”. The content is accompanied by a text on the top, which serves as the question stating, “What’s the difference between Jesus and a picture of Jesus” and a text on the bottom which serves as the answer stating, “You can hang the picture with one nail”. The humour in this material is *referential humour* depicted in a *direct joke*.

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.26

The Degree of Understanding of Material 5 Language Content



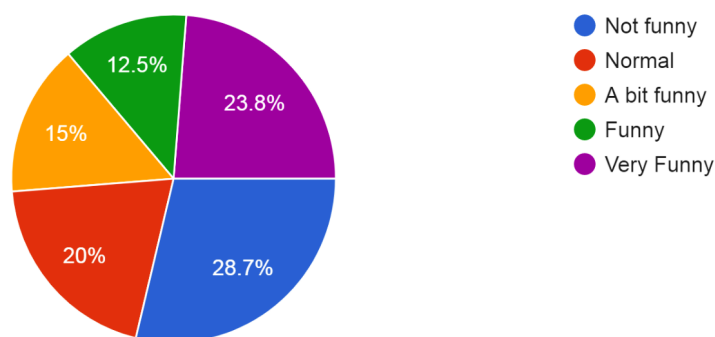
The findings of figure 3.26 show elevated degrees of *understanding* with 68.8% of the respondents rated their understanding as perfect (57.5%) and almost perfect (11.3%). These results could be inferred from the *simplicity* and *straightforwardness* of the language used. The material makes a cultural/historical reference to the *historical crucifix of Jesus*. According to the *Semantic Script Theory of Humour* (SSTH), the present material exhibits a *pun*, which plays on the *opposing* scripts using the joint word “hang”. When it comes to the 15.1%, who had low

levels of *understanding*, possible difficulties are related to the pragmatic inferences of the language used. The word “hang” refers to two scripts which *overlap* in meanings, one refers to “hanging something on the wall” while the other to “hanging to death” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 2022b).

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.27

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 5 Humour



We can infer from figure 3.27 that 51.3% of the participants found the material to be on some spectrum of funniness. They rated their reaction as “Very Funny”, “Funny”, and “A bit funny” with 23.8%, 12.5% and 15%, respectively. However, the proportion appreciating humour decreased significantly compared to the previous materials. In addition, the proportion of the students judging the material as normal/not funny increased, 48.7%, in comparison to the previous ones.

The *Target* (TA) KR in the present content is “*Jesus*” i.e., the Christian religion and culture. We can relate the increase in the number of the students, who could not appreciate the material’s humour, to their sensitivity towards *Religious Humour*. Another possible explanation is their inability to understand the *pragmatic logic* of the language used in the material. It is worth

noting that although the material contains *religious humour*, which our participants consider to be non-humorous (see figure 3.17), high degrees of humour appreciation are notable.

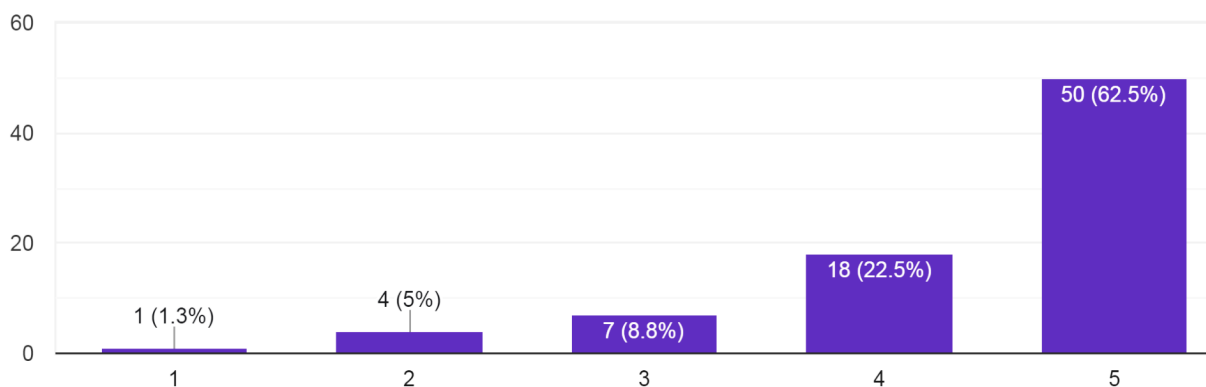
Material 6

The sixth humorous material utilised in the test is an excerpt from “*The Roast of Justin Bieber*” at the Comedy Central Roast. The latter is a show where comedians gather around to roast one celebrity. The video features Pete Davidson, an American Stand-Up comedian, as he throws *Banter* and *teases* Justin Bieber. The comedian comments “ Justin, you know, I lost my dad on 9/11 and I always regretted growing up without a dad”, adding “Until I met your dad, Justin” [Audience Laughs] and he finishes saying “Now I am glad mine is dead”. [Audience’s Sympathetic “Awh:”].

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.28

The Degree of Understanding of Material 6 Language Content



The findings in figure 3.28 show that a big portion of the respondents displayed high levels of understanding, corresponding to 85%. We can connect these results to the *clarity* and

simplicity of most aspects of the used language. According to GTVH, The material's *Language* (LA) Knowledge Resource (KR) features a simple linguistic structure which translates to an easily digested substance for the audience (Krikmann, 2006). Moreover, the type of humour in Material 6 is classified as a *Putdown (Self-deprecation)*. It denotes humorous comments targeted at oneself as the butt of the joke. The speaker juxtaposes *different yet overlapping* scripts, "I lost my dad on 9/11 and I always regretted growing up without a dad" and "Until I met your dad, Justin" and later on presents the *punchline* as a *self-deprecating* comment stating, "Now I am glad mine is dead." The *Narrative Strategy* KR of the humour although complex yet it is easy to understand and flows swiftly.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.29

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 6 Humour

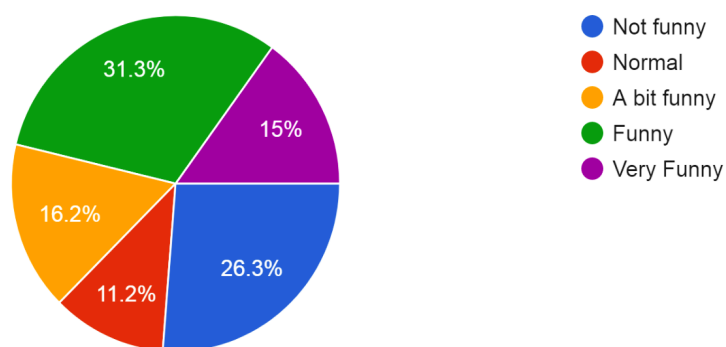


Figure 3.29 displays a high degree of *appreciation* with 45.3% of the responses rating the material to be funny. However, 27.4% of the participants showed low appreciation of the material, together with a noticeable portion (26.3%) that rated it as not funny despite the high degrees of *understanding* of the same material.

The ludicrousness of this material is built upon *tension* built up in the first script, the *release* included in the second script, and finally the *punchline* in the third one. The last-mentioned tackles the taboo subject of death, wherefrom it is inferred to be the source of no/low appreciation of the material's *Dark Humour*. The latter includes a sensitive topic in the culture of the participants, the fact that might trigger negative emotions in them when made fun of. As demonstrated by the findings of the questionnaire, students reported that "Dark Humour" is a problematic subject to laugh about.

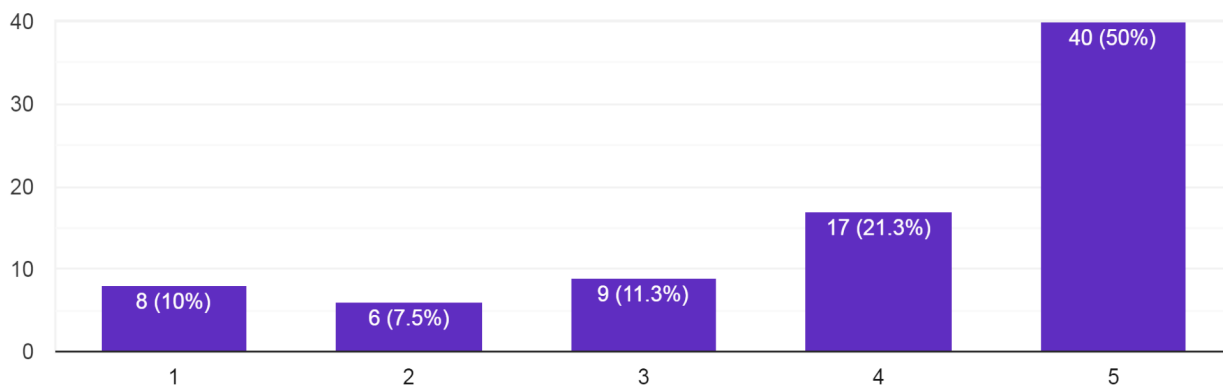
Material 7

The material displays two pictures juxtaposed top to bottom. The top image displays the famous director Quentin Tarantino, the second picture displays a tent in a quarantine facility. The first image is accompanied by a text that has the name of the celebrity. The second image displays a *Spoonerism* stating, "Tentin Quarantino". This type of humour depicts letters or sounds that are switched around within one or in between two individual words, either purposefully or inadvertently. In detail, the material aims at creating *rhythmic* wordplay and poking fun at the topic of the recent pandemic.

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.30

The Degree of Understanding of Material 7 Language Content



The results demonstrate a high rating of understanding the language content, with 71.3 % of the participants. Only a comparatively small percentage (17.5%) had low understanding levels of the language in the material. The findings might be extrapolated from the language's ease and clarity. The content of Material 7 is considered a spoonerism, which relies on one simple Knowledge Resource (KR) when referring to GTVH, which is the name of the famous American director. This type of humour focuses on the *Language* (LA) KR, which comprises all required elements for a text's “*verbalization*”.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.31

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 7 Humour

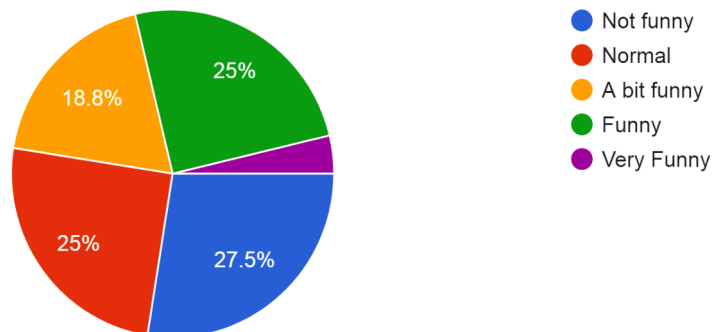


Figure 3.31 reflects that 71.3% of participants have scored varying low degrees of *appreciation*. These degrees expanded show that 27.5% rated the material to be “Not funny”, 25% rated it as “Normal”, and 18.8% rated it as “A bit funny.”. However, 28.7% of the population rated the material to be really funny. Comprehensively, 3.7% scored the material to be “Very Funny”, and 25% scored it as “Funny”. Reflecting Hay’s (2001) theory on Humour perception, the findings exhibit that understanding does not necessarily entail appreciation. The challenge that the participants faced, to appreciate the material, was rather cultural than linguistic. The participants might not have known who “Quentin Tarantino” was. By the same token, a distinguishable portion of students (46.3 %) has reported through the questionnaire data that they frequently face difficulties with grasping cultural nuances within humour. In addition, the large majority of the respondents equated their humour difficulties to cultural challenges (see figure 3.16).

Material 8

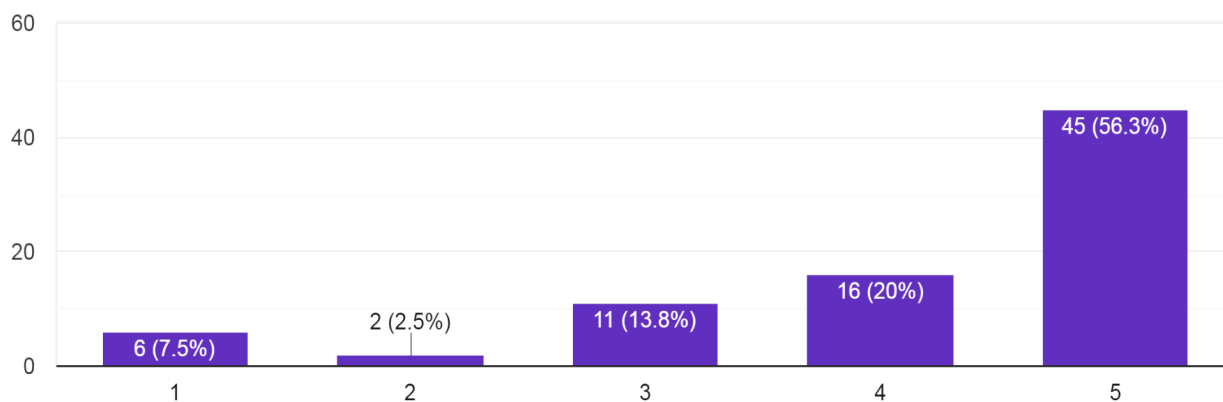
The material is a video of the show *Saturday Night Live*, and the segment used in the material is called “*Picture Perfect*.” The latter is a *skit* portraying a drawing competition in which the

host welcomes [Segment Theme Song Playing] and says “Come on Daniel, Daniel! Tell me how you are feeling?” and the game participant responds “Well, I took a drawing class in college, so I think I am going to be just fine” [Participant Laughs], the teammate of the participants [Cheers], says “Yay Daniel” while [Clapping]. The host replies “Oh! Love, support, confidence! I like it. Your category is trendsetters and here is what you will be drawing today.”, he hands the participant a clue card as a text pops up on the screen and shows that what Daniel has to draw is “The Prophet Muhammad” [Bell rings to start timer][Audience Laughs]. Daniel looks at the card, looks at the camera and then looks around silently with a confused and scared look [Audience Laughs]. This humour falls under the umbrella of *Religious Humour*.

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.32

The Degree of Understanding of Material 8 Language Content



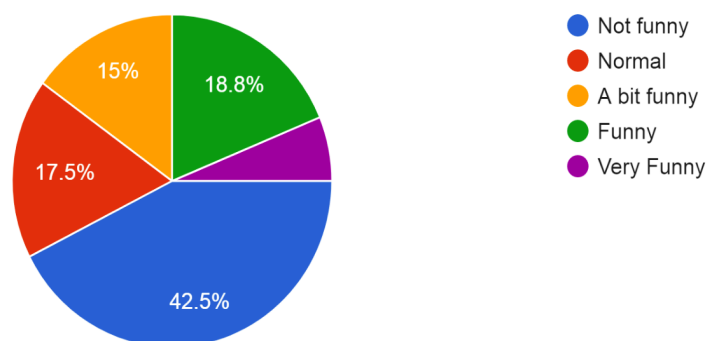
We can see from the results demonstrated in figure 3.32 that the majority of the participants had a great deal of success understanding the material's language. As a result, 76.3% of participants understood the material's language features. The present humour is

“*situational/referential*” and it is strongly reliant on the arrangement of a certain scenario. The current *scenario* referred to is the event where a participant has to hone his skills to draw a certain historical figure when the host presents the *punchline*, which is represented by the figure being *the Prophet Muhammad*. This allows for the *script opposition* to occur between the first script “drawing a historical figure” and the second script “*Drawing the Prophet Muhammad*” and the possible ramification of that action. The humour is also aided by the *cheerful* tone of the host disregarding the predicament that the participant feels.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.33

The Degree of Appreciation of Material & Humour



The findings shown in the figure above illustrate that a large majority of responses (42.5%) evaluated the material to be “Not Funny”. In addition, 32.5% of the responses showed a low degree of appreciation (“normal” to “a bit funny”). In contrast, 25%% reported finding the material to be of a high degree of funniness. By extrapolating the GTVH, noticeable KRs are brought ashore to increase the funniness of the material. The *Script Opposition* (SO) KR is exhibited via the juxtaposition of the first script “drawing a historical figure” and the second script “*Drawing the Prophet Muhammad*”, generating an *incongruous factor* for ‘Daniel’. The

Situation (SI) KR also improves on the context of this *referential humour*, which cued Charlie Hebdo (French satirical magazine) satirical drawings of the Prophet Muhammed. The caricatures sparked outrage among Muslims across the world. Moreover, the magazine offices were the target of a terrorist attack that claimed the lives of 17 people. Wherefrom came the confused and scared look of Daniel.

Unlike Western cultures, depicting the divine and religious figures is not accepted in Muslim World. Aggravated, is all forms of religious satire. Making fun of religious figures, symbols, and beliefs is seen as seriously offensive in Eastern Muslim cultures (Algerian culture included.).

However, it is worth mentioning that, reflecting on previous content (Material 5), a discrepancy in attitudes is shown to be evident. The present material's Target (TA) KR is "*the Prophet Muhammad*" whereas in Material 5 the TA KR is "Jesus". In material five, students have demonstrated high levels of appreciation even though the humour was of *religious* nature but of the *other* culture. Yet, in the present material, a bias can be inferred from the low degrees of appreciation since the TA KR of the humour is aimed at their own culture.

Material 9

The material represents a *meme* with text on top and an image at the bottom. The text represents a dialogue with "HIM" and "HER" as participants, which is a common *meme template*. The dialogue starts when 'HIM' states, "the dishwasher is acting weird", 'HER' responds "what's it doing" and 'HIM' replies "chopping fu**ing vegetables". The image displays a woman smiling and cutting vegetables while a man behind is looking at her smiling.

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.34

The Degree of Understanding of Material 9 Language Content

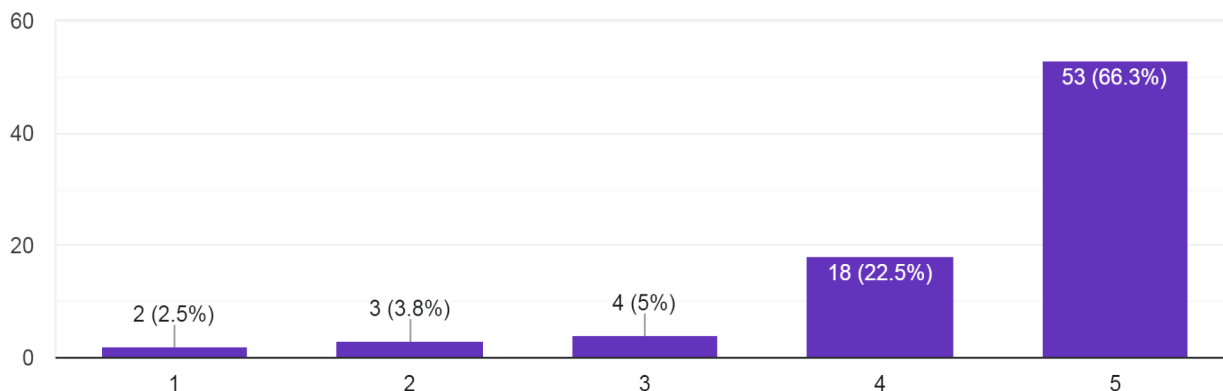
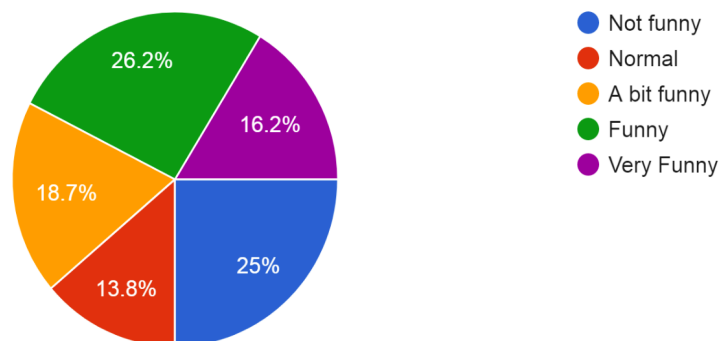


Figure 3.34 shows that a big majority of the participants (88.8%) understood the material's language to varying degrees. The *simple* and *clear* language used in the material is one reason for the above results. The present material displays, according to GTVH, an easily understood *Language (LA) KR* which aids in its understanding. The material sets the context of the scene through dialogue and the imagery accompanying it, which makes it unchallenging and very straightforward. Due to the visual nature of the material, the listener is able to easily detect the *opposing scripts* as well as the non-verbal element, which is represented in the image. Accordingly, this non-verbal element, a woman chopping vegetables, serves as the *punchline* which resolves the incongruity created by the juxtaposition of the first script "dishwasher acting weird" and "chopping fu**ing vegetables".

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.35

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 9 Humour



The findings in the above figure demonstrate clear variations of appreciation. A segment of 42.4% of the respondents showed high degrees of *appreciation*. However, a notable portion of the students (25%) is shown to assess the material as “Not Funny”, and 32.5% show low appreciation. The material employs *sexist* humour embodied in an *ironic* statement. This provides an explanation for the students’ who could not laugh at this type of humour. This explanation is proclaimed in results demonstrated in Figure 3.17 attesting that 28.7% of the participants find *sexist* humour not to be funny.

Material 10

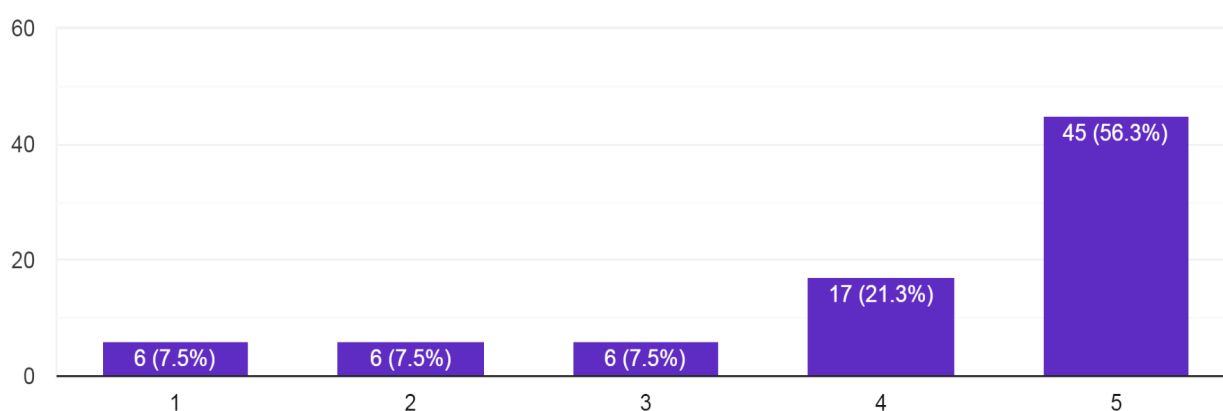
The material illustrates a food place’s sign, which includes a text written in chalk. This template is common with *memes* that often poke fun at medical fun facts, and overly exaggerated blog posts’ titles that include health advice (such as an apple day keeps the doctor away). This meme represents a *religious parody* by making a *stereotypical* and *racist* remark about “Muslims”. The text says, “Eating two strips of bacon for breakfast reduces your chances of

being a suicide bomber by 100%”. This text does not make this overtly racist comment for no reason because this sign is also promoting that the food place serves bacon.

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.36

The Degree of Understanding of Material 10 Language Content

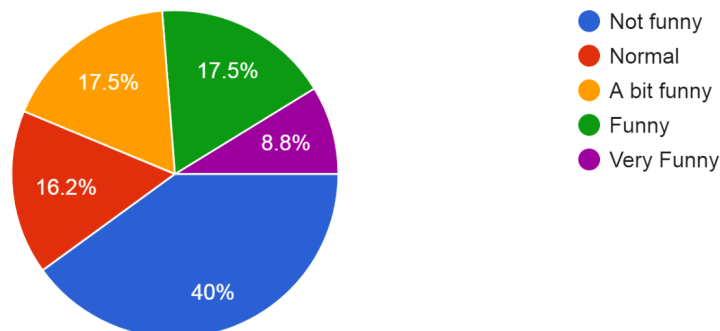


The data illustrated in the above figure reports that 77.6% of the students managed to understand the language content to a perfect level. Yet, 22.5% of the participants are shown to have found difficulties in understanding the language content. The *pragmatic* connotations of the language used are to allude to the act of eating bacon being a tell-tale of not being a Muslim and a terrorist by correlation. Accordingly, students might have faced some *metalinguistic (pragmatic)* challenges, specifically in understanding the intended *irony*.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.37

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 10 Humour



The figure above elucidates that the participants have shown diverse degrees of *appreciation* for the material's humour. A moderate portion of 26.3% has the material to be on a high spectrum of humorousness. Yet an almost equivalent 40% of them have judged the material to be "Not Funny", in addition to 33.7% of them who did not appreciate the humour

This material implements *parody* as its main form of humour. This parody, according to the Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH), engages in *script opposition*, through *opposing* and *overlapping* two scripts. The first script is "Eating two strips of bacon for breakfast reduces your chances", which builds intrigue for the consumer, but towards anticipated health-related connotations. However, the second script is "of being a suicide bomber by 100%", which generates the "*incongruous factor*". Consequently, the material was categorised as *Racist Humour* offending a religious belief (prohibition of pork in Islam), as inferred from the large portion of the participants facing challenges in appreciating the humour. The latter is evident from prior gathered data from the questionnaire (figure 3.17).

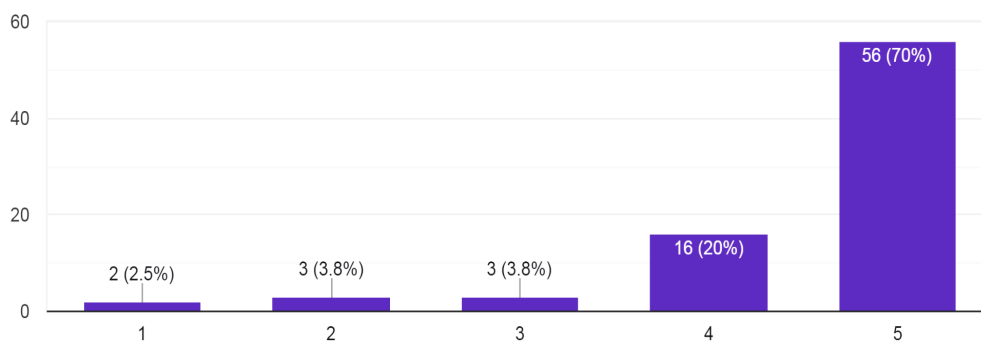
Material 11

Material is established on two paralleled vertical sides, a common template for *memes*. This template dubbed *The Yellow Glasses Black Guy* meme is a sarcastic response to something inappropriate, amusing, or fascinating. The expression on a character's face conveys a dark connotation or a willingness to do dirty acts. The material also features a female version on the top left to juxtapose the man's side and the woman's side (Memepedia, 2019). The top left image of the female version is accompanied by the text "guy gets down on one knee", while the bottom left of the guy's version features the text "girl gets down on two knees". The humour has a sexual connotation to it represented in the guy's side referring to a sexual act while the woman's version refers to a marriage proposal and deception.

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.38

The Degree of Understanding of Material 11 Language Content



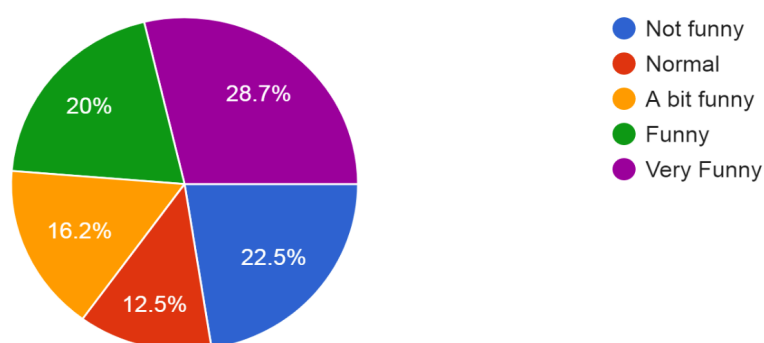
The figure on top indicates that almost all students (90%) have managed to understand the language content of the material, while only a marginal portion (10%) found difficulties in doing so. These results are due to the use of *simple* and *clear* linguistic items, which in themselves rely on the engagement of pragmatic inferences to grasp the intended meaning. The present humour

is in the form of a *meme*, which prior data show students' familiarity and knowledge of it making disseminating its linguistic and meta-linguistic features an unchallenging process.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.39

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 11 Humour



The results display that the big section of the participants (48.7%) evaluated the material to be on a high level of humorousness. While 22.5% didn't appreciate the humour present in it, judging it to be "Not Funny". By applying the GTVH parameters, the Situation (SI) KR seems to be the most influential factor in making the material humorous. The latter is exhibited through the use of "*reaction*" images as props to highlight the funny trope of the context. Similarly, the meme structure/template, which includes the *props* in addition to the *text*, serves as the Narrative Strategy (NS) KR by producing a funny simple narrative accompanied by the SI KR. This is the case due to the visual nature of the material, which accentuates the participants' engagement. The present material falls under the *Sexual Humour* category, of which the students' have displayed negative views and reported it to be a *non-humorous* subject. Accordingly, 25% did

not appreciate the humour which is consistent with the prior percentages of students that highlighted *sexual humour* as a problematic topic (figure 3.17).

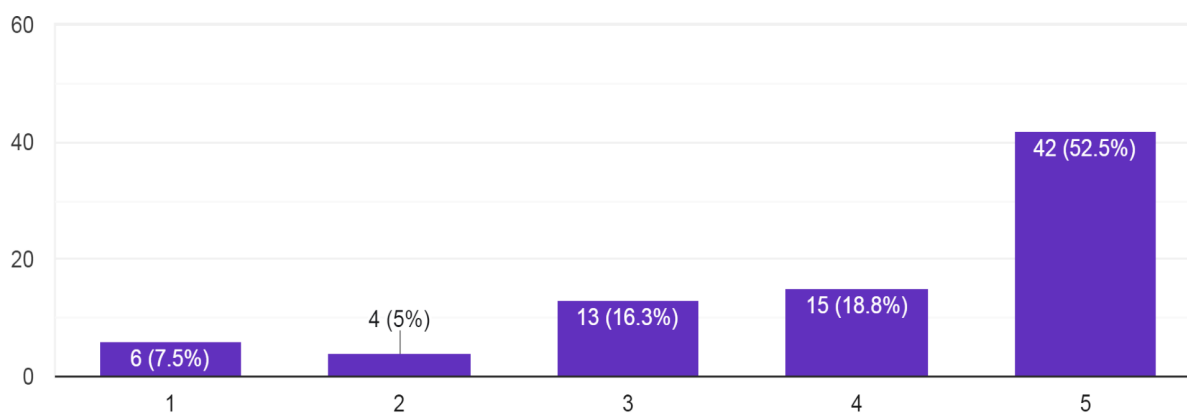
Material 12

The material follows the popular meme structure, which presents a text on top followed by an image on the bottom. The present template is called *The Secret Ingredient Is Crime*, which is a quote from the British comedy series *Peep Show* in which the character *Super Hans* offers a chocolate bar he stole to the character Jeremy, and when Jeremy remarks it's delicious, Hans says “The secret ingredient is crime.” The quote became used in image macros as a reaction image (Know Your Meme, 2019). The present material follows the same structure, with the text on top invoking the question “How does the British Museum have so many incredible artifacts compared to other museums?”. Whereas the bottom section includes a picture of the character Hans, with the quote “The secret ingredient is crime” subtitled under him. The material makes a cultural reference to how the British Museum has the highest number of stolen incredible artifacts from around the world and from various cultures and periods of time (Little, 2018).

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.40

The Degree of Understanding of Material 12 Language Content

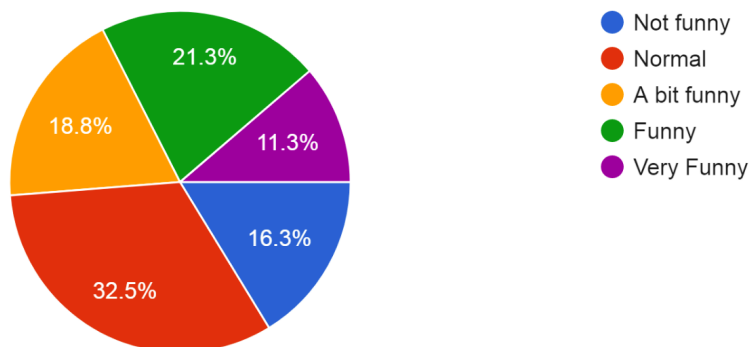


The above figure illustrates that the large majority of the participants (71.3%) have managed to understand the material, *perfectly* (52.5%) and *almost perfectly* (18.8%). While a minor segment of them (21.3%) faced difficulties in comprehending the language content of the material. The present humour is *referential* humour, positing a cultural reference, the context, as the principal focus. Accordingly, although the linguistic features of the material are of simple and clear nature, embodied by an uncomplicated *dialogue*, and composed of a manageable lexicon and easily followed grammatical structure. Yet, a portion of the students proves it difficult to make the required inferences to attain the referential and contextual meanings. According to the *Script Opposition* KR, humour is curated by opposing two scripts which also overlap in their content. The first script is presented as the question, "How does the British Museum have so many incredible artifacts?" while the second one is exhibited as the answer, "The secret ingredient is crime", for the first one, yet it creates an incongruity due to the Logical Mechanism being flouted.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.41

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 12 Humour



The data gathered in the figure reports that 32.6% of the students truly appreciated the humour. While the others revealed low levels of appreciation that range from “a bit funny”, “normal”, to “not funny”. The material presents *referential* humour, which relies on cultural references as the main point of inference, accordingly, adequate cultural knowledge is displayed by the participants who managed to appreciate the material. However, the last-mentioned results are to explain the students’ possible cultural barriers resulting in the hindrance of disseminating the intended meaning of the language and relating to the humour as do the British audience. Barriers can be the lack of knowledge about the cultural events involved in the humour, such as the history behind the British Museum and the incredible pieces it contains, which were mostly stolen from various places and cultures around the world.

Material 13

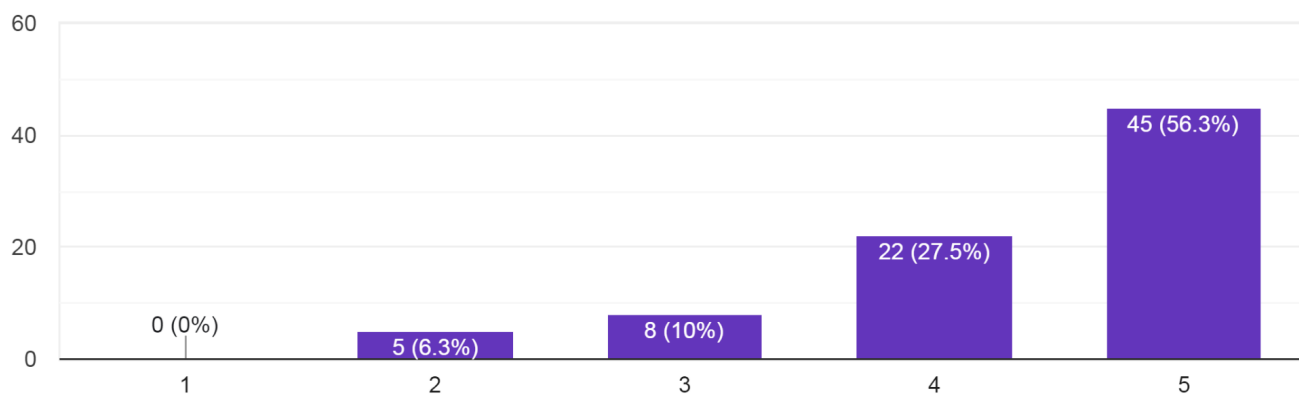
The present material is an excerpt of the comedian Russel Peters’ Stand-up show *The Green Card Tour*. He performs what is known as crowd-work, by conversing with audience members and creating jokes. He goes on to talk to a member of the audience and says, “What kind of Arab are you, bro? Morrocan? and Iraq? [Audience Cheers] (member of the audience, gestures to

mean Iraq), So not Morrocan? You are Iraqi. I've been to Iraq. Obviously to perform,...For the Iraqis, it's not a very [gestures cheerfully] comedy-filled place [Audience Laughs] It's not like there is comedy clubs in Iraq, you know like, (stereotypical Arabic accent) "Welcome to Saddam Jiha-ha-had hut" [Audience Laughs]. It's not like (stereotypical Arabic accent) "Our comedy is the bomb!" [raises a hand up]. [Audience Laughs] (stereotypical Arabic accent) "Watch us explode with laughter" [Audience Laughs]."

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.42

The Degree of Understanding of Material 13 Language Content



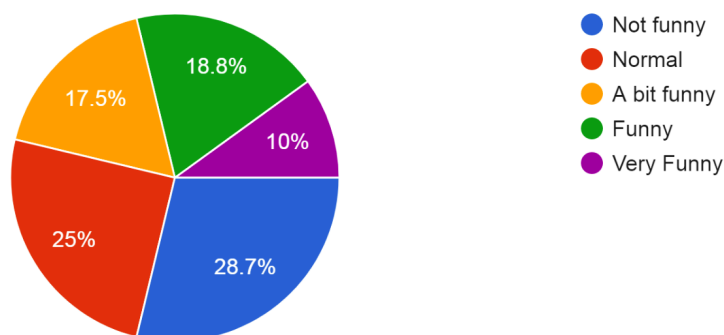
The shown results display that the majority of the students (83.8%) reported high degrees of linguistic comprehension of the content. Recording *perfect* (56.3%) and *almost perfect* (27.5%) understanding of the language content of the material. The material showcases fairly *simple* and *straightforward* language. The material is considered "*situational/referential humour*" due to its *audiovisual* nature. Thus the humour depends on the story presented by the comedian and the

cultural information he presents in his commentary, despite it being exaggerated. He balances on the lines of the first script exhibited by the notion that “Iraq is a not comedy-filled place” and “It’s not like there is comedy clubs in Iraq”. The *punchline* is presented through the *punny* statements “Welcome to Saddam Jiha-ha-had hut”, “Our comedy is the *bomb!*” and “Watch us *explode* with laughter” [Emphasis added] which are accompanied by a change of tone (cheerful) and accents. These verbal elements also serve as non-verbal cues which this type of humour relies on.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.43

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 13 Humour



The collected data reports that 28.8% of the students demonstrated high levels of humour appreciation. Whereas the large majority (53.7%) displayed difficulties in their appreciation. These results can be inferred from the type of humour present in the material. The material demonstrates Racial Humour, in which the *Target* (TA) KR of the humour is the Arab/Muslim culture, the one the students belong to. Similarly, prior data shows that the students are sensitive toward the topic of *racial humour* when targeting Islam. That being the case, such humour evoked in them a feeling of resentment. According to the theories of Superiority, such humour is

“playful hostility” aimed at others, in many cases, or it can be diverted towards one’s self, to either create a sense of superiority or release. Based on these results and the previously acquired data, students did not appreciate this material as they regard it as hostile behaviour/speech.

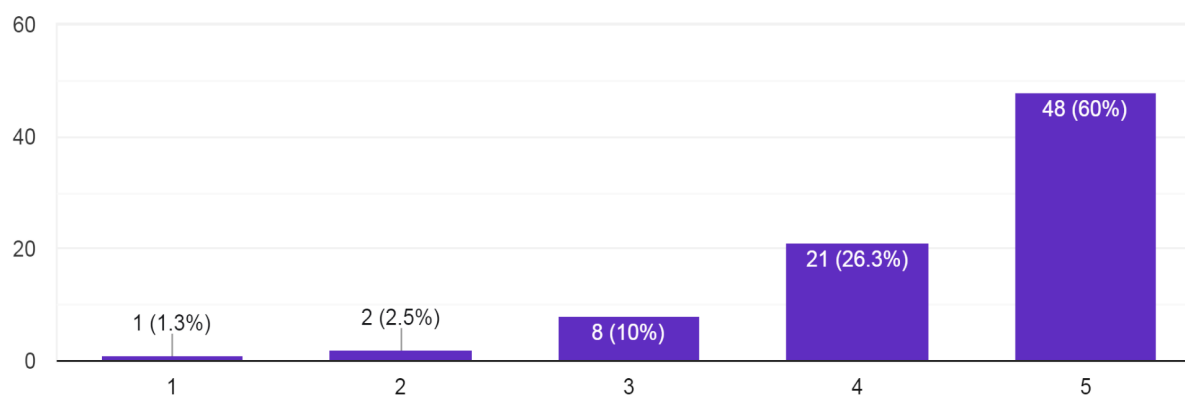
Material 14

The material is a short clip from the famous comedian Dave Chappelle's stand-up show *Sticks & Stones*. The comedian goes on a long monologue in which he tackles the subject of “Abortion”, he says: “I will be real with you, and I know nobody gives a fuck about what I think anyway. I am not for abortion. [Audience member screams], Oh shut up nigga ! [Audience Laughs], [Audience Cheers] (laughingly) I am not for it, but I am not against it either [Audience Cheers] It all depends on who I get pregnant [Applause] I don’t care, I’ll tell you right now. I don’t care what your religious beliefs are or anything. If you have a d**k you need to shut the fuck up on this one, seriously [Audience Cheers].”

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.44

The Degree of Understanding of Material 14 Language Content

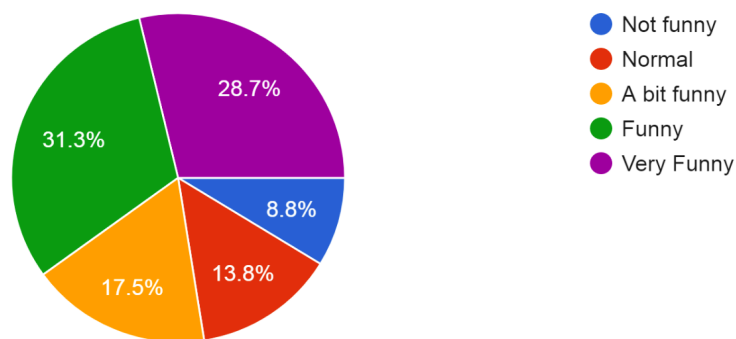


The large majority of students (86.3%) reported that they understood the language content *perfectly* (60%) and almost *perfectly* (26.3%) as displayed in the figure above. Only a small minority (13.7%) encountered some difficulties in understanding the language. The material is an audiovisual type of content. The linguistic features of the monologue presented by the comedian are fairly *simple* and *clear* and they did not prove to be challenging for the majority of the students. The comedian adopts *situational humour*, in which the focus is on the events and elements of the story he provides and from there the humour is derived. Moreover, he posits two *opposing* scripts and *overlapping* scripts about the same issue. The first script is “I am not for abortion” which is juxtaposed with the later statements “I am not for it, but I am not against it either” and ends with the *punchline* presented as the last script “It all depends on who I get pregnant”.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.45

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 14 Humour



The students demonstrate high degrees of appreciation represented by 60% of them. While only 22.5% of them showed difficulties in appreciating it. These results follow the notion of “*recognition entails appreciation*”. In other words, the vast majority enjoyed the humour after

easy and spontaneous recognition of the ludicrous. However, the material is loaded with taboo language drawing on taboo topics. This fact explains the low appreciation of the material by a considerable segment of the participants.

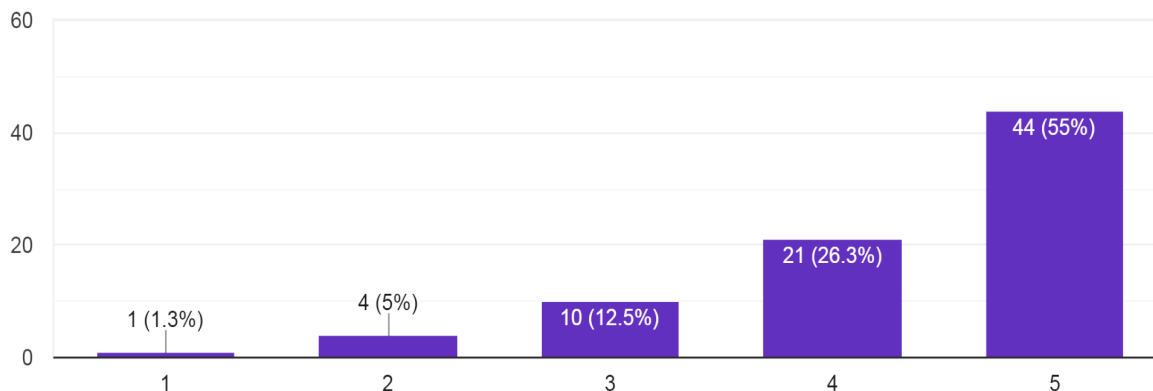
Material 15

The material is a clip from one of the stand-up shows of the American comedian, *Bill Burr*. The comedian goes on a long rant about religion and the existence of God, he says, “you die and you go up to get judged. God pops in the DVD of your life (Judgemental Tone as God) “Hmph, I don’t know about this right here” [Audience Laughs] “you mind explaining yourself” This might be the most arrogant thing I say all night, but I actually resent the fact that I am going to get judged someday [Short Silence] like if that’s true, that somebody is going to judge me. It doesn’t even make any sense it’s like (Angry Tone) “Dude you made me, so this is your fuck up, alright?” [Audience Laughs and Cheers] Let’s not turn this around on me, Jesus Christ! You give me freedom of choice, you make w*ores, you have me suck at Math, and you don’t think this thing is going to go off the rails? [Audience Laughs and Cheers] You set me up to fail and now you’ve got the balls to now question your own god damn work. [Audience Laughs] Dude if I made a car, if I built a car and it didn’t run I wouldn’t like burn it forever (Judgemental Tone as God) “you evil piece of sh*t” and light it on fire [Audience Laughs] I wouldn’t! I would troubleshoot, is there gas in the engine? is the battery charged? Anything beyond this I’ve got to get a real man to look at it but I believe in you (referring to the car) [Audience Laughs] I am going to try and help you out”

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.46

The Degree of Understanding of Material 15 Language Content

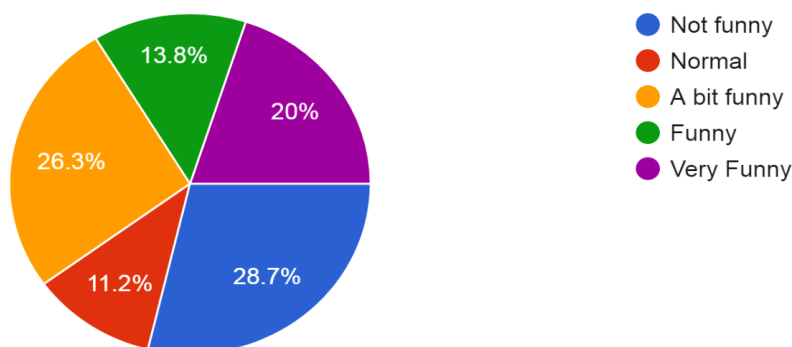


The collected data above shows that the majority of the participants (81.3%) were able to understand the material's language content to a great extent. While only a small minority of 18.7% faced challenges regarding the comprehension of the language content. The humour used in the material is both “*verbal*” and “*referential*”. The comedian builds this whole *narrative* on how he refuses to get judged and puts forward various examples of how “irrational” it seems to him. The language used is very clear and straight to the point. The humour relies on the events of the context built by the comedian, which doesn't require any linguistic complexities to be employed. *Verbal humour* doesn't require deep linguistic tinkering, since the humour is derived from its narration and delivery.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.47

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 15 Humour



The present data document that 33.8% of the students found the material funny (20% very funny, 13.8% Funny). While a sizeable portion of 28.7% evaluated the material to be “Not Funny”, and 37.5% displayed issues in appreciating it. The first segment’s appreciation of the material can be explained by extrapolating the GTVH on the present material and measuring the use of various KRs, which add to its hilarity. The Narrative Strategy (NS) KR adds the most impact and humorous influence to this material. Delivering the humour as a long monologue filled with small dialogues and asides has made humour very rich. Similarly, the Situation (SI) KR is very utilised by the comedian through his use of different tones and evocations according to the character he tries to play. However, the Target (TA) KR being “God” results in a majority of students who did not enjoy this *religious humour*. Muslim World’s culture does not tolerate humour targeting the divine and the religious. Moreover, over half the students displayed negative attitudes towards religious humour (Figure 3.17).

Material 16

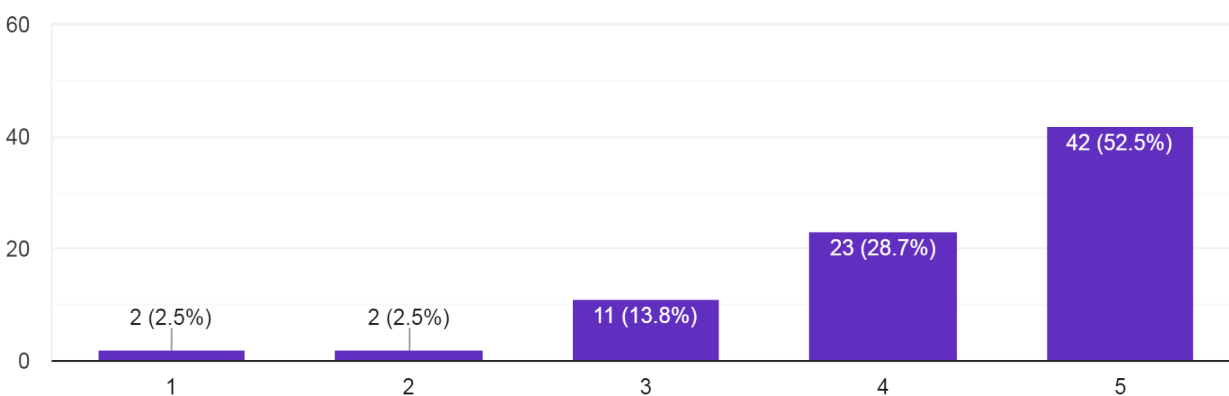
The material is a short clip from the YouTube channel called “TVFilthyFrank”. The channel is run by the host character “Frank”, who plays the protagonist role and boasts a strained voice making comments and rants about everything in life. The clip starts with a text presenting the segment called “I AM CREATIVE”, the text under it says “Draws autistic pictures and believe he/she is an artist”. After the segment is introduced coupled with some introductory sound effects, *Frank* emerges and says “Mr. look I am creative. *Changes into *Mr Look I am Creative** (Subtle Pretentious Accent) “I feel the need to distinguish myself from everybody else. I like to draw and I like to paint” (Distorted Background Voice) “IM ALSO SEVERELY AUTISTIC” [*Mr Look I am Creative*] “I might do a self-portrait” [Ugly Drawing Posted on Instagram is displayed] (*Frank*) Wow! *claps* Vincent Van Gogh! Now all you need to do is cut your ear off.

Oh, wait! Your drawing sucks. So you'd basically be a faggot with his ear cut off [Voice: Art History Memes],[Text: ART HISTORY MAYMAYS LOL EDUCATION BITCH] [Sad Music Playing] [Mr Look I am Creative crying], Voiceover: Life is tearing me down, Text: “[Insecurity Intensifies]”.

Question 1: Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

Figure 3.48

The Degree of Understanding of Material 16 Language Content

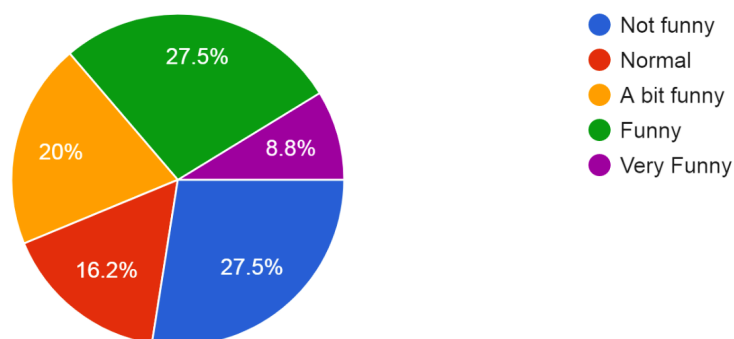


The figure above demonstrates that the large majority of the students (81.2%) were able to *perfectly* (52.5%) and *almost perfectly* (28.7%) understand the language content. While only a small minority (18.8%) faced difficulties in grasping the language content. The material is *audiovisual* in nature and the humour present in it is *referential humour*, which depends mostly on the story, events and other elements presented by the creator. The creator relies a lot on digital editing, as he makes a collage of sceneries with different characters and different wardrobes, in addition to the sound effects and the music facet incorporated as well. This genre is *Satirical Humour* which replicates everyday life and diverse subject matters with the aim of criticising them. The language employed is often filled with *profanity* and *ironic* statements.

Question 2: How funny is the material?

Figure 3.49

The Degree of Appreciation of Material 16 Humour



The data collected show that 36.3% of the participants evaluated the material to be, i.e., they managed to *appreciate* the humour. Whereas the other 43.7% displayed difficulties in appreciating the material's humour. By analysing the material according to the GTVH principles of KR, the Situation (SI) KR is the main parameter used to evoke laughter and create humour. The creator of this material indulges heavily in *Satirical Humour*, which involves a lot of story building through a variety of characters and backstories. The use of props is also very frequent coupled with the involvement of the *Narrative Strategy* (NS) KR, which is made much easier for the creator due to the accessibility of editing and the non-requirement of live performance.

Furthermore, the *Target* (TA) KR of this humour genre and material specifically is “people on the internet” and “things people do on the internet”. The latter traits and characteristics belong to the *Gen Z* generation and specifically the age group of this sample. In fact, inferring possible emotional barriers is plausible, especially since prior data has shown that students often exhibit negative emotional reactions towards *taboo* humour (see figure 3.17).

3.5.3. Summary of the Test Results and Findings

The qualitative analysis of the data indicated some pattern between understanding the language content and humour appreciation. However, it is worth mentioning that semantic understanding is to be supplemented with pragmatic interpretation to reach the intended humorous meaning. The test findings exhibited a predominant pattern/relationship between students' *understanding* of the language content of the materials and their *appreciation* of the materials' humour, which is in accordance with Hay's (2001) notion of "recognition entails appreciation". Accordingly, high degrees of understanding correspond with high degrees of appreciation.

Moreover, the participants in the study showed an appreciated ability to *linguistically* and *pragmatically* disseminate wordplay (puns, spoonerisms), register clashes, parody, direct jokes, and irony, yet satire (Material 16) showed to be harder to detect regarding its *metalinguistic* aspects. Moreover, the analysis of the data revealed that the materials that employed humour through *memes* displayed higher degrees of understanding and appreciation due to students' familiarity with the latter's *structure* and template, as a result of their dominance over the internet, the "home" for our sample's generation. Additionally, *referential/verbal humour* also witnessed elevated degrees of understanding as its humour is dependent more on the events, characters, story, the use of props, and employment of less complex language. This type of humour, according to the application of the GTVH, showcases mostly the Situation (SI), Narrative Strategy (NS) and Logical Mechanism (LM) Knowledge Resources (KRs).

Nevertheless, the analysis of the test data has also shown that the understanding of the language content and the recognition of the "joke" do not always translate into appreciation. By referencing the questionnaire's data and analysis, it is plausible to infer emotional barriers which

impeded the appreciation process, depending on the type of humour presented. A case in point, the findings showed that religious humour, which was reported by the students in the questionnaire to be the least appreciated genre or subject of humour, was not appreciated by the students when their culture or beliefs were the Target (KR) of the humour (the case of Material 8, 10, and 13). Contrastively, when the Target (KR) was either universal (God, in the case of Material 15) or from “the other” culture (Jesus, in the case of Material 5) the students could find more funniness in appreciating the humour. The latter pattern could either be linked to cultural barriers, related to ethnocentrism, or emotional and psychological barriers as seen in their inability to laugh at themselves.

The students also displayed some *cultural* challenges in which the lack of knowledge of some aspects of the culture hindered their appreciation (Material 7, for instance). Other genres of humour, such as *Dark Humour* (material 6), rendered the students unable to appreciate the humour due to *emotional* difficulties in handling dark subjects. Racial humour also showed to posit the most noticeable appreciation difficulties, in which a large portion of students showed their negative feelings towards (Material 10 and 13). The aforementioned results stem from aspects of Algerian culture regarding religion, sex, and dark topics as very taboo subjects to joke about.

Conclusion

Taking into account the results of the research tools used in this paper, high language proficiency and rich knowledge about the target language culture are confirmed to facilitate recognition and appreciation of humour. However, Algerian EFL students displayed a spectrum of other barriers which impede their interpretation of English humorous texts. Despite their abilities to manage most of the linguistic and metalinguistic aspects of humorous language,

appreciation of the latter showed to be more difficult without sufficient cultural knowledge and awareness, in addition to adequate emotional acceptance and flexibility. Further, the topics of humour also impact the students' abilities to appreciate the humorous texts, with religious, racial and sexual humour sitting at the forefront of the taboo and most challenging genres to handle.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The focus of this research was to see how well Algerian EFL students can interpret authentic English humorous texts. It also delved into the factors that might influence how well the FL's humour is recognised and appreciated. Relying on the data analyses and the application of the humour theories (GTVH; Attardo & Raskin 1991, Attardo 1994, Attardo 2001), non-native speakers' perception of humour in the foreign language was proved to be dependent on linguistic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic and cultural competences of humour. The latter is due to the contribution of elements of language and culture to the complexities of humour. In other words, English humorous texts depend on linguistic/semantic, pragmatic, and cultural qualities of English humour that are generally different from Algerians' own language, culture, and humour. Accordingly, students must have or develop, in addition to the linguistic knowledge, the appropriate cultural knowledge and sociolinguistic recognition. The findings of the current study displayed that among the eight types of humour (wordplay, satire, irony, sarcasm, self-denigrating, register clash, and spoonerisms) that were used in the study, only a few of them were reported to be very difficult. They are those that depended largely on the employment of cultural references, such as satire and sarcasm which are mostly culturally based. The latter was followed by language-dependent humour (e.g., wordplay and catchphrases) as it relies not only on the TL's linguistic features, yet also on the students' pragmatic competence. The results of this study also showed that there are a lot of variables that might influence a student's humour competency. These aspects are connected to the students' intercultural competency and awareness of the TL's culture, as well as their linguistic, pragmatic, and strategic competencies. These competences allow them to perceive the language, and relate it to the relevant cultural, referential, and contextual elements, enabling the construction of the incongruity factor that most

humour depends on. According to Freud's theory of release, the humour perception phenomenon also encompasses psychological and emotional forces. In engaging with English humour, proper emotional engagement and regulation are necessary, particularly given the diversity of genres covered by the latter, some of which may be controversial in the EFL learner's culture. As a result, acceptance and openness contribute to reducing cross-cultural misunderstandings and biases.

1. Conclusions and Implications

Considering the findings of this study, it is claimed that several EFL students may struggle to understand jokes and recognise humorous phenomena as daily genuine settings of language usage. Accordingly, English language teachers should incorporate humour into their teaching. They are also expected to develop their students' understanding of English humour, in all of its shapes and palettes, in order to improve their social and communicative skills. Add to it the premise that comicality aids teachers in creating a non-threatening atmosphere, which reduces students' emotional filters, allowing them to learn more effectively.

The reported association between language proficiency and cultural knowledge with recognition of humour, on one hand; and between positive attitudes towards consumption of humour with language proficiency, cultural knowledge, understanding of the humour's language, and recognition of cultural references, on the other; proved the usefulness of introducing humour in EFL classrooms. English language learners would improve their linguistic, cultural, pragmatic, and strategic skills, as the interpretation of such a discourse, humour, requires this set of the aforementioned abilities.

Furthermore, the teachers may encourage EFL students to explore their path into genuine discourse by intensive exposure to authentic humorous materials that would help them develop

the required competences and efficient approaches to dealing with humour in English, in particular; and text in English in general.

To sum up, raising awareness of the fruitfulness of incorporating humour into the students' strategies of language learning will enhance and develop their humour competence, which in turn develops their language competencies involved in understanding the humour. Students usually face challenges about how to develop their intercultural competence, and which authentic materials are effective to use. While humour as it is accompanied by its various linguistic and cultural facets is made one of the most authentic genres of language expression and communication. So advocating for the development and use of a humour-competence framework for creating classroom activities would require further investigation of its impact on students' ICC.

2. Limitations of the study:

A possible limitation of the current study is related to the students' self-perceived language which cannot be really representative of their actual proficiency and mastery of the language. In different circumstances, a better approach to investigate their language proficiency would have been by conducting an assessment of it as part of the study.

Besides, a face-to-face test followed up by questions was planned to establish discourse about students' answers and investigate whether their understanding was sufficient and whether their appreciation was observable. Due to the nature of the test and questionnaire being conducted online these validations and further confirmations were not possible to achieve.

These previous limitations were mainly the reason for our sample's unavailability during the second semester. Attempts to group our sample and invite them to the school grounds through emails and announcements on the Facebook group, yet it boasted with failure. Further, most of

our population has shown to be uncooperative which resulted in missing the preferred number of participants in comparison to the total number of the population, which is supposed to be (85 out of 107) instead of (80 out of 107).

Furthermore, plans to produce a comparative analysis between different age groups, specifically between first-year License students and second-year Master students, could not have been managed properly and with efficient time management.

3. Suggestions for Future Research

According to the previous scholarships and literature on humour research, this is the first study to investigate Algerian students' ability to understand and appreciate humour as well as inferring the barriers that lead them to misinterpret humour.

Moreover, future research is indispensable in the case of humour genres and types that Algerian students find difficulties in. The inclusion of a comparative analysis between different age groups would elicit the variations in sense of humour between those groups.

Furthermore, future studies should include the numerous factors that impact students' perceptions of humour. Pro-active observation of students' reactions to the distinct humorous materials would provide further observable information to include in future research data. And maybe a longitudinal experimental study to investigate the reciprocal influence of humour and linguistic, cultural, pragmatic, and sociolinguistics competences.

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A
STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear students,

This questionnaire is of crucial importance for my Master Thesis research project. Therefore, I would be very grateful if you take of your time to answer the questions. I would like to assure you that the questionnaire is anonymous and confidential.

You are kindly requested to answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge by ticking off the appropriate box(es). Your answers are essential for the validity of my research and your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your aid and participation.

Akram Benharoun,
Department of English,
University of 08 Mai 1945, Guelma 2022.

Section One: Background Information

1. Gender:

Male

Female

2. How old are you?

.....

3. For how long have you been studying the English language (middle school, high school, university including this year)?

10 years

11 years

12 years

13 years

Section Two: Language Competences and Language Use

4. Please rate your English language proficiency level.

Expert

Good

Proficient

Modest

Limited

5. Your Academic Achievement.

A (14.25 - 16.30)

B (12.37 - 14.22)

C (10.88 - 12.36)

D (9.66 - 10.86)

E (8.92 - 9.55)

6. Please rate your knowledge (what you know) about the English language CULTURE.

Very Good

Good

Average

Below Average

No knowledge

7. Do you use English outside the classroom?

Yes

No

8. How often do you use English (speaking to people; reading books, news, and social media posts; writing, texting friends, and posting on social media; or listening and watching) outside the classroom?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

9. What media do you use the most? (Don't tick the ones you don't use)

Watching Movies/Series/ TV Shows

Watching Documentaries

Reading Books

- Writing Social Media Posts, Comments, or Chats (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, etc.)
- Watching on YouTube
- Listening to Music
- Listening to Podcasts
- Other

10. What are the difficulties you usually face when you communicate with or when you are exposed to material in English language? (You can choose more than one answer).

- Linguistic difficulties (Vocabulary shortage, difficult grammatical structure...).
- Misunderstandings/misinterpretations due to lack of knowledge about social and cultural aspects.
- Biases, stereotypes, and prejudices.
- The material triggers negative emotions in you, distracts you, or you do not relate.
- Other

Section Three: Humour, Culture, and Language.

11. Do you enjoy consuming (watching/reading/ listening to) humorous materials?

- To a great extent
- Moderately/Enough
- Somewhat
- Very little
- Not at all

12. How often do you consume humorous materials?

- Every day

- Once a week
- Less than once a week
- Rarely
- Never

13. Which medium do you prefer when it comes to consuming humour? (you can choose more than one)

- Stand-up Comedy (Stage shows or Netflix specials, etc.)
- Cartoons (Comic strips, Caricatures, etc.)
- Comedy Books
- Sitcoms (such as Friends, It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, Parks and Recreation, Two & a half-man..etc)
- Memes
- Other

14. Which of these types of humour do you recognize (KNOW)? (you can choose more than one)

- Direct Jokes
- Puns
- Satire and Parody
- Irony
- Spoonerisms (Catchphrases)
- Self-Deprecating Humor
- Retorts
- Banter

- Teasing
- Register Clash
- Memes
- Other

15. How often do you fail to understand the language used in humorous materials?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

16. How often do you grasp the cultural references and nuances (social norms, economic situations, historical events, or figures..) embedded in the humorous texts?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

17. What are the difficulties you face in understanding humorous materials? (you can choose more than one)

- You do not grasp cultural references.
- You do not understand the linguistic aspects (unknown terminology, lingo, or different vernaculars/accents, etc.)
- Unable to perceive the intended/hidden meaning of the language/humour.

- You do not notice/know the joke's structure, type, or template.
- You do not relate to the subject.
- Humour triggers negative feelings in you. (or It's hard to be emotionally engaged in humour).

18. Which subject matter does not seem to be humorous to you? (you can choose more than one)

- Sexual Humour (Humour about sex and sexuality)
- Dark Humour (Humour about serious/painful subjects: suicide, mental health, disabilities, etc.)
- Religious Humour (Humour about religion)
- Sexist Humour (Humour targeted towards men or women)
- Racial Humour (Jokes on a given ethnicity, etc.)
- None
- Other

19. Leave below any comment you have

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your kind cooperation!

APPENDIX B
HUMOUR TEST

Please follow the instructions below:

- Watch/View the material.
- Provide the FIRST opinion/ attitude/ impression you have about each material.
- There are no right or wrong answers, any response counts.

Material 1:



url: <https://youtu.be/eT1vjANLFCE>

Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 2:

failing classes

Me: "Can I get some extra credit?"

Professor: "cAn i GEt SomE eXtRa creDiT?"



Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 3:

url: <https://youtu.be/KRUQYQ5dOP0>

Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 4:

Zilla
@GoodZilla



date: so what do you do?

me: i own a mining business

date: what do you mine?

me: i mine my own fucking business

2018-03-21, 4:08 PM

418 Retweets **1,657** Likes

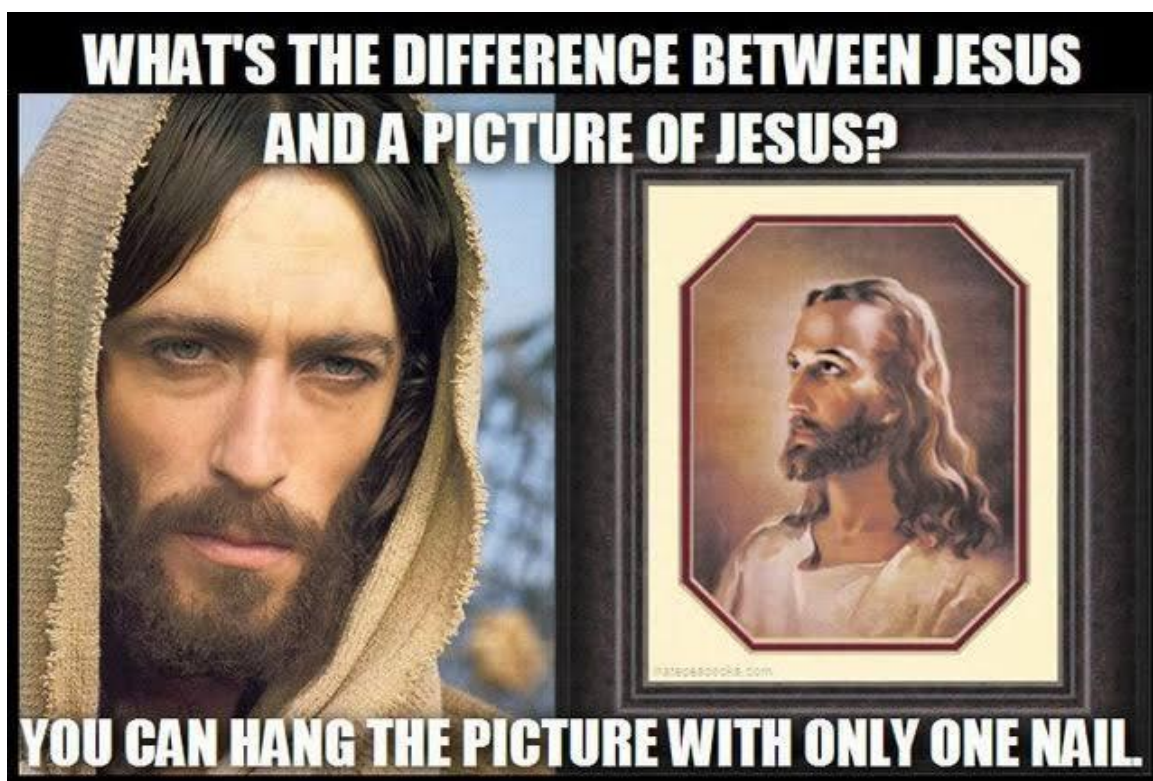
Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 5:



Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 6:



url: <https://youtu.be/jty9ptRe6Mg>

Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 7:



Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 8:

url: <https://youtu.be/xKPGW6WH2QQ>

Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 9:

HIM: the dishwasher is acting weird

HER: what's it doing

HIM: chopping fucking vegetables



Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 10:

Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 11:



Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 12

How does the British Museum have so many incredible artifacts compared to other museums?



Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 13:



url: <https://youtu.be/mBkvREJroNQ>

Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

Material 15:



url: <https://youtu.be/cvvNa4T9y3g>

Please rate your understanding of the material's language. (On a scale from 1: not at all, to 5: perfectly).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly

How funny is the material?

- Not funny
- Normal
- A bit funny
- Funny
- Very Funny

APPENDIX C

SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION TEST RESULTS

Table C.1*Correlation Analysis Between Language Proficiency and Linguistic Difficulties*

		Language Proficiency	Frequency of Linguistic Difficulties
Spearman's rho	Language Proficiency	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
		N	80
	Frequency of Linguistic Difficulties	Correlation Coefficient	-.311**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
		N	80

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table C.2*Correlation Analysis Between Cultural Knowledge and Recognition of cultural references*

		Cultural knowledge	Recognition of cultural references
Spearman's rho	Cultural knowledge	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
		N	80
	Recognition of cultural references	Correlation Coefficient	.618**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
		N	80

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table C.3

Correlation Analysis Between Attitudes towards Humour Consumption and Language Proficiency

			Attitudes towards Humour Consumption	Language Proficiency
Spearman's rho	Attitudes towards Humour Consumption	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.528**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001
		N	80	80
	Language Proficiency	Correlation Coefficient	.528**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.
		N	80	80

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table C.4

Correlation Analysis Between Attitudes towards Humour Consumption and Cultural knowledge

			Attitudes towards Humour Consumption	Cultural knowledge
Spearman's rho	Attitudes towards Humour Consumption	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.523**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001
		N	80	80
	Cultural knowledge	Correlation Coefficient	.523**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.
		N	80	80

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RÉSUMÉ

Ce projet d'étude évoque les problèmes et soucis d'interprétation des notions humoristiques par des locuteurs non-natifs où la langue leur est étrangère. L'humour est planétaire et universel en ce qui concerne les structures, néanmoins local lorsqu'il s'agit du contenu ; car il demeure lié et associé à des éléments linguistiques, discursifs et culturels. Par suit, il va s'avérer être difficile et point simple à comprendre pour les personnes étrangères issues de cultures différentes et originaires d'autres pays, cette recherche vise à disséquer les compétences impliquées et les lacunes et obstacles rencontrés dans la compréhension et l'appréciation des textes humoristiques conçus en anglais par des apprenants algériens de langue anglaise comme étant une langue étrangère au département des lettres et de la Langue anglaise à l'université de Guelma. En ce qui concerne les objectifs susdits, la recherche a uni des analyses qualitatives et quantitatives, la première analyse était nécessaire pour étudier minutieusement les matériaux humoristiques utilisés dans le test, quant à la deuxième analyse, cette dernière a été menée pour étudier et disséquer la non-compréhension des apprenants et donc la non-appreciation des textes humoristiques authentiques. Par suit, la deuxième partie de l'analyse du test a couvert des données quantitatives sur la compréhension et l'appréciation de ceux qui se sont portés volontaires pour le test du langage humoristique, en outre, le deuxième ensemble de ces dernières est représenté sous forme de questionnaire ayant pour but d'examiner les compétences linguistiques, culturelles mais aussi L'attitude des apprenants étrangers (EFL) vis-à-vis de l'humour à travers une auto-évaluation et des défis conçus pour la compréhension du texte humoristique anglais. Vient par la suite la combinaison entre les compétences culturelles et celles du niveau d'une part, et l'aptitude à comprendre l'humour anglais d'une autre part. Les tests de corrélation de Spearman ont été calculés pour révéler une association positive entre les deux variables ; la maîtrise de la

langue ainsi que les connaissances culturelles et la variable dépendante de la reconnaissance de l'humour avec ($r = 0,528$) et ($r = 0,523$) de manière respective.

Mots-clés: interprétation de l'humour, appréciation de l'humour, connaissances culturelles, maîtrise de la langue, EFL.