

Linguistic and Cognitive Mechanisms of Verbal Humour

A thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Applied Linguistics

by

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Linguistic and Cognitive Mechanisms of Verbal Humour” submitted by Tariq Khan bearing Regd. No. 10HAPH01, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics in the School of Humanities is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

This thesis is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted previously in part or full to this or any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Parts of this thesis have been:

A. Published in the following publication:

1. Vaagartha: A Festschrift for Prof. Padmakar R. Dadegaonkar. Hyderabad: Impressions Print. ISBN 978-93-5087-691-6, Chapter Optimizing on Humor in Language Classrooms. Page number 45-56.
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and

B. Presented in the following conferences:

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2. International Conference on Humour: Texts and Contexts organized by LittCrit and Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology, Trivandrum from 6-8 December 2013. (National/International)

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Declaration

I, Tariq Khan, hereby declare that this thesis entitled “Linguistic and Cognitive Mechanisms of Verbal Humour” submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Professor Panchanan Mohanty is a bonafide research work of mine and is free from plagiarism. I further declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I consent to include this thesis into the online repositories of Shodhganga/INFLIBNET. I also consent for this thesis to be available for photocopying and inter-library loan.

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Dedication

To all the humourists, comedians, clowns and jesters who dedicate themselves to the pursuit of making people laugh, forget pains and think of their situations in alternative ways. I dedicate this research to them because their actions remind the humanity that there is a funnier side even to the deathly situations and that is worth enjoying and sharing with each other.

Acknowledgements

These pages cannot do justice to the people who have helped me in the formulation of ideas and commit them to the pages that follow in this thesis. To single out the contributions of any particular individual would be to slight the contributions of many others who have positively influenced my progress in this research for over five years.

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I propose endless thanks to the online repositories of books and theses. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to the incredible library consortia at DART-Europe Theses (Europe), Dspace MIT (United States of America), Electronic Theses Online Service (United Kingdom), and Shodhganga (India) for making the state-of-the-art research available so smoothly.

I wish to acknowledge with thanks the Central Institute of Indian Languages, where I received my first regular employment and the most compatible colleagues I found therein.

Whatever is left unsaid, or is said wrong, is all my own. Needless to mention, any deficiencies or discrepancies are entirely my responsibility, especially for the fact that I have occasionally gone my own way. I have put in all efforts while I know there is much more to come.

Heartfelt thanks and sincerest regards to one and all.

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Metalanguage

List of abbreviations

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis
FR: Forced Reinterpretation
FTA: Face Threatening Acts
GPS: Garden Path Structure
GTVH: General Theory of Verbal Humor
HM: Humour Mode
IPA: International Phonetic Alphabet
KISS: Keep It Simple Stupid
RT: Relevance Theory
SDM: Surprise Disambiguation Model
SSTH: Script Based Semantic Theory of Humor
TFN: The Faking News
TUT: The Unreal Times
VH: Verbal Humour
WWKBH: Waah Waah Kyaa Baat Hai

Script

This thesis has mostly used the Roman script; however, for examples from languages other than English it has adopted the International Phonetic Alphabet (2005). For Hindi-Urdu examples, it has mainly followed the sample prepared by Manjari Ohala in IPA Handbook (2005) with slight deviations wherever it was necessary. In addition, the proper names have appeared in the Roman script everywhere.

Spelling and grammar

This thesis has followed the conventions for English spelling and grammar as prevalent in the United Kingdom. However, for citations it retains the spelling and grammar conventions of the original/source text. For non-English examples, the English equivalents are available either in single inverted commas or in a separate column.

Language

This research has attempted to avoid the use of language that has sexual, ethnic, political or ideological leanings as much as possible. Some occurrences may be due to contextual compulsions as the concept necessitates it for examples/illustrations.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Situating Verbal Humour in Cognitive Linguistic Research

Humour is a defining characteristic of human communication.¹ It occurs frequently and has a formidable presence in different cultures, spaces and times. Thereby, it has become a natural concomitant of our day-to-day interactions. Thereby, it has also become an organic part of the language, culture and cognition. It is so integral to language, culture and cognition that earlier scholars neither realised the need to study it in its totality nor did they have the adequate means to do so. Consequently, Humour Studies almost failed to achieve the formal status of an academic discipline. Even today, the humour research is struggling to make independent headways.

Humour represents a considerable sophistication of the human cognitive systems while verbal humour that is a subset of it accounts for a marvellous synergy between language norms and their cognitive correlates. The expression Verbal Humour or Verbally Expressed Humour or Verbalized Humour has the same connotation as they all refer to creative plays involving diverse components of the human speech. Such playful communicative acts depend on different instantiations and selective violation of the conventions of spelling, pronunciation, word formation, sentence construction and meaning derivation. However, verbal humour has its structural patterns and a set of rules that aim to create laughter among the interlocutors. Arguably, it has emerged as an essential and normative ingredient of all human interactions in the physical and virtual spaces. Verbal humour is the representative form of humour that creates a generic myriad of its own. This sub-class of humour is not coterminous with a distinct variety of jokes. Rather, it is a different genre that includes jokes, tongue twisters, riddles, wits, puns, funny one-liners, counterfactual headlines, etc. The binding thread among them is such language manipulations that can trigger the experience of amusement and funniness. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Instances of verbal humour
i	Husband to wife: Do you know our children got their brain from me. Wife: I am sure they did because mine is still with me.
ii	Customer in a restaurant: I cannot eat this food because it is rotten. Please call the manager. Waiter: What's the point? He too will not eat it.
iii	When newly-wed couples smile at each other, people know why. When the couple smiles even after ten years of marriage, people wonder how.
iv	A girl at a dress shop: What is the price of this dress? Sales boy: It is ₹5000 Girl: Oops! Girl: What is the price of that pink dress over there? Sales boy: Oops! Oops!

Table 1.1: Instances of verbal humour

In the above set of example, the first joke is about the tendentious duel among couples to prove their partners dumb. The second joke has the waiter failing to understand the intention of the customer's utterance. The third one also reflects a social stereotype that married couples keep fighting. The final joke is sarcasm on the girl's response to the price that the sales boy cited for the first dress. The above instances of verbal humour reflect some stereotypes prevalent in the society necessitating some familiarity with the socio-cultural milieu. Also, swapping of participants' roles or dialogues does not affect their funniness so much. Now, consider some more examples:

Sl. No.	Instances of verbal humour
i	I do not find it very hard to meet expenses. They are everywhere.
ii	God has given us the real eyes to realise the real lies.
iii	I am not tired; it is just that my body needs some rest.
iv	Mother: Did you fight with your friends and lost a tooth? Child: No, I did not lose the tooth; it is in my pocket.

Table 1.2: Instances of verbal humour

Contrastively, the verbal humour in the above examples does not require the kind of socio-cultural knowledge necessary for the ones preceding them. Concerning translation, the items in example 1.2 pose a higher degree of a challenge than the ones in example 1.1. What makes them distinct from the first set is the fact that all of them achieve the humorous effect due to the creative manipulations at some level of the language use. In the first example of this set the expression meet expenses evokes an idiomatic use of the word meet. They are everywhere makes it clear that the speaker is not able to earn enough to make payments. The second item in this set rests on punning within and across the word boundaries. The homophonous words/expressions real eyes, realise and real lies appear different in writing but sound similar quite in the running speech. The context arising from the neighbouring words help arrive at the intended word/expression. In the third instance of humour, the speaker refuses to admit that s/he is tired. However, the second part of this item makes it clear that s/he is tired. The speaker uses the third person impersonal pronominal my body to refer to himself/herself. It is an ingenious use of lexical relations. In this case, I am and my body appear to be in contrastively whereas the state of tiredness and the need for rest seem to suit different persons. In the final item the polysemous uses of the word 'lose' is the leading cause of funniness. The child's innocence or cleverness becomes apparent with his/her admission that the tooth is not lost it is in my pocket.

Language and cognition are integral to use and experience humour. Language is so integral to human interactions that no one understands how integral it is. The significance of language becomes very evident when an individual encounters a new speech community, or the language apparatus fails in the case of some people. Still, the research community realises the gift of language system in some way or the other. What about humour and its sub-classes? What should fail to emphasise the centrality of humour in the linguistic and cognitive systems? The presence of verbal humour in abundance seems to have trivialised the linguistic and cognitive specialities that they embody. That is why there is surprisingly less research on the linguistic and cognitive aspects of verbal humour. Study on humour can be illuminating (Plester 2016) and bring rich incentives. Morreall (1983) offers a new perspective to the scholarly engagements with humour. He expresses surprise at the verifiable fact that thousands of books and articles engage with psychological phenomena like fear and anxiety, but very few of them address the positive

aspects of laughter. He further argues that a complete picture of human life will remain a distant dream unless the scholars seriously engage with the phenomena of laughter. Goldstein (1990) considers humour, including verbal humour peculiar to the human beings and expresses faith in the prospects of research focussing on linguistics and humour interface. Raskin (1985) describes it as one of the defining traits of the humans. According to Goldstein (1990: 39),

“Until fairly recently, linguistic research paid only lip service to the relevance of contextual and cultural elements for the study of language, but when one is investigating humor, these elements are immediately seen to be essential ingredients.”

According to (Stock 2002), humour is inevitable for human survival and the studies on humour have spanned across the ancient, medieval and modern times. The phenomenon of verbal humour has presented a particular kind of mystery that early scholars did not admit very openly. Many definitions and theories have emerged over time, but even today, it is hard to pinpoint a single factor that can account for a humorous phenomenon. Most attempts to decode its mystery have failed because they either adopted ad hoc tools or lacked the proper know-how to implement them.

Verbal humour is a necessity of the human mind as well as the luxury of the human language. It is a construct of the human culture as well as the aesthetics of the human cognition. The human interactions abound with plenty of instances featuring verbal humour in formal and informal contexts and public as well as private spaces. It is a frequent and natural companion of the speech events. However, it overwhelmingly contradicts the reason that verbal humour does not find a place in academic research. The scholars of earlier and modern times have taken initiatives by analysing its nature, compiling ready-to-use materials and preparing treatises. However, their efforts have not led to the evolution of a well-formed pursuit. While funniness remains the touchstone of humorous phenomena, it appears to have prevented humour from evolving as an academic discipline. It is possible that ‘Humour Studies’ did not take off in educational institutions because it dealt with funniness, a lighter side of the human behaviours. There is hardly any evidence in the history of intellectual traditions that points to serious pursuits of humour. The absence of terms such as Humourology or Humouristics or Humourography indicates that the scholars in the past did not see enough reasons for assigning Humour Studies a formal disciplinary status. Apte (1988) is an exception to this. He is among the most vocal humour scientists who pitched for developing a formal discipline of humour. It is also possible that these scholars assumed humour to be too informal to include in the formal atmosphere or that the inclusion of humour as an academic pursuit would leave it bereft of its most salient aspect, i.e. funniness.

Even during the final decades of the 20th century when many new disciplines emerged with hyphen and slashes in their names, indicating the participation of two or more academic fields, Humour Science or Humour Studies did not evolve in a desirable form. However, several disciplines like Film Studies, Aesthetics, Theatre Arts, Management Studies and Gender Studies grew and prospered reasonably well during this period. Why Humour Studies could not evolve abreast with other fields like Film Studies, Theatre Arts, and Gender Studies, all of which are interdisciplinary in nature? A viable reason for Humour Studies’ failure to grow as an academic discipline is that it is always evolving in its forms and remains at the crosscurrents of disciplines. The above discussion may hint at some shortcomings of the research trends, however, considering Humour Studies it was good in some ways. Since numerous subjects engage with the issues that

are pertinent to humour, many productive interactions have also taken place. Consequently, research in humour became incredibly multidisciplinary. Therefore, it is not a surprise that though it lacks a formal status, Humour Studies is one of the most convincing examples of inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary academic pursuits today. However, it still does not contain all explanations to the enigmatic nature of humour.

The name 'Humour Studies' is suitable for studying humour because in pedagogy 'Studies' is a new trend pointing to fuzzy boundaries and the participation of diverse fields of study. The academic study of Humour faces a two-way problem. First, since humour is a universal phenomenon of human communication, there are many assumptions about its mechanisms. Second, since it is still new as a research field, many such assumptions have become the epitome of truth. Among all these, the scholarly contributions from various disciplines and the participation of multidisciplinary research have rendered tremendous informality and flexibility to the definitions of humour and gave the field of Humour Studies enviable richness.

In this backdrop, the present research concentrates on the two most salient dimensions of verbal humour. The first dimension includes the linguistic aspects whereas the second one includes its cognitive aspects. This thesis explores verbal humour in its multifarious and fascinating dynamics while focussing on the language structures and their cognitive correlates. While these structures operate on the surface level, their cognitive counterparts function behind the scene. Therefore, this thesis sets out to examine the language structure of verbal humour and account for the same from a cognitive point of view intersecting between the complementary sets of established and emergent theories of humour. It also tries to conjugate between the cooperating aspects of these humour theories. Accordingly, the objectives of this research are detailed in the next section.

1.2. Research objectives

This thesis aims at harmonious blends of insights from linguistics and cognitive sciences to develop sustainable ideas about humour use and humour experience in day-to-day human interactions. It has some objectives that broadly fall under the following categories: disciplinary objectives, descriptive objectives, theoretical objectives, methodological objectives and empirical objectives.

1.2.1. Disciplinary Objectives

- a) To present verbal humour as a hybrid genre that is fit for cross-disciplinary studies.
- b) To initiate and accommodate Humour Studies as new vistas of research in Linguistics and Cognitive Sciences.
- c) To highlight Linguistics as a dependable component in Humour Studies.
- d) To explicate how the analysis of verbal humour can enhance the metalinguistic awareness.

1.2.2. Descriptive Objectives

- a) To develop a comprehensive understanding of the various dimensions of Verbal Humour.
- b) To present the linguistic architecture of verbal humour.
- c) To prepare a corpus of verbal humour and propose a classification of verbal humour by blending the traditional and modern approaches.

- d) To describe the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour.
- e) To examine the new genre of bilingual humour from the perspective of intercultural pragmatics.
- f) To build a corpus of Hindi, English and code-mixed verbal humour and enrich it for computational linguistics utilities.

1.2.3. Theoretical Objectives

- a) To put together various theories those have addressed the phenomenon or some aspects of it.
- b) To analyse the working of the humour theories and the ad hoc theories in the context of verbal humour.
- c) To account for humour experience and humour orientations in theoretical terms.
- d) To examine various forms of verbal humour for readability.

1.2.4. Methodological Objectives

- a) To project personality profiling (trait-based approach) for qualitative research in psycholinguistics.
- b) To test the feasibility of mixed method as an alternative to the dichotomous choices between quantitative and qualitative methods.

1.2.5. Empirical Objectives

- a) To conduct psycholinguistic experiments to study the cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour.
- b) To implement Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation – Behaviour (FIRO-B) and Jokes and I (JaI) as instruments to study the relationship between the personality types and the orientation to humour use.ⁱⁱ
- c) To conduct experiments to arrive at the psycholinguistic correlates of language proficiency, humour processing and humour quotient and orientations in Hindi-English bilinguals.
- d) To study the effects of multilingualism in processing monolingual and bilingual verbal humour.
- e) To develop insight into the processing of literal versus non-literal (humorous) language use.

1.3. Terminological-Conceptual Framework

This section is a metadiscussion that has a facilitative role in understanding the technical vocabulary and theoretical intricacies of humour research. It takes into consideration various concepts that are pertinent in Humour Studies. Since the expressions representing these concepts have their origin and currency in other disciplines, it is important to know what they mean in the context of present thesis and the framework of Humour research.

VERBAL HUMOUR (VH) or VERBALLY EXPRESSED HUMOUR (VEH) refers to such phenomena in which the humour, laughter, funniness, amusement or pleasure arises primarily due to manipulations in the use of language.^{iii & iv} At several places, the term humour stands for verbal humour.

FUNNY items and INCONGRUENCE are the two most frequently occurring words in humour research. Therefore, it is advantageous to list their meanings and usages, especially in Humour Studies. Let us first consider FUNNY items. Funny items are those items that have a behavioural response in the form of laughter. Something that is funny

causes pleasant feelings and evokes laughter. INCONGRUENCE is a cognitive phenomenon. Something that is incongruent deviates from the norms belies expectations and creates ephemeral or durable tension. Both FUNNY items and INCONGRUENCE are important and interdependent concepts in humour research.

SCRIPT, SCHEMA, FRAME, MEANING and INTENTION refer to only one concept throughout this thesis. In the present research, all these terms stand for the meaning of an utterance or part of it. In the context of verbal humour, the utterances exhibit humorous duality and conflict of scripts.

MECHANISM in this thesis refers to various linguistic structures and psychological states involved in the production and comprehension of verbal humour. The use of this term is literally synonymous with 'strategy'.

PROCESSING: The term processing, in general, refers to the identification, analysis and interpretation of stimuli or signals in the written or spoken texts. In the present context, it stands for encoding and decoding of experimental stimuli through identification, analysis, interpretation, rating and ranking of verbal humour.

JOKEHOOD and FUNNINESS: Jokehood is the status a phenomenon can acquire. The determining criteria for jokehood are as follows: such a phenomenon should cause the experience of funniness and have the structures typical for jokes. The issue of funniness is varied and can refer to several things. In the context of this research, funniness relates to the positive feeling arising due to encounter with humour. Therefore, funniness is a product of humour experience.

PUNCHLINE and JABLINE refer to such words and expressions that diffuse the ambiguity prevailing until their occurrence. They perform the same function. However, their relative positions in the text decide whether the concerned one is a punchline or a jabline. Attardo (2001) offers a simple clue to distinguish them. The punchline typically occurs at the end of the text whereas jabline can occur at any other place. Both in linguistic and in cognitive paradigms, a punchline or a jabline is the most salient aspect of verbal humour. However, most scholars treat the two terms as synonyms of each other. The other terms synonymous with punchline are gagline, tag line and laugh line.

LAUGHTER refers to the activity of laughing. It is one of the most intriguing manifestations of verbal humour. Considering that the term humour is of recent origin and laughter is a natural outcome of it, it looks reasonable that most scholars in the past used the term laughter to refer to humour. Even contemporary scholars use humour and laughter interchangeably. The individual instances of verbal humour like joking, wits, punning, wordplays and riddles are mostly linguistic and conceptual entities. However, laughter is a biophysical product that follows them. Not all instances of laughter may be products of humorous experiences, and not all humorous stimuli may result in the instances of laughter. Therefore, the present thesis maintains the distinction between the terms humour and laughter.

HUMOUR USE and HUMOUR EXPERIENCE: In some research literature, the expressions 'humour use' and 'humour experience' have featured as cover terms for any instance of humour. This kind of generic use leaves out the distinction between the interlocutors who initiate humour and those who respond to it. This thesis employs the two expressions 'humour use' and 'humour experience' contrastively. This distinction is inevitable for the classification of participants in experiments. Notably, it does not intend to contest the application of these expressions at other places.

As stated above, this section serves as a metadiscussion for the thesis. It is important to mention that the present research has followed the British conventions for

spelling, vocabulary and grammar. However, some variations may occur in the case of cited texts wherein it has retained the convention followed by the original author.

1.4. Methodology and Research Paradigm

Concerning methodology, this research has not followed either qualitative or quantitative methods in a strict sense. Instead, it has adopted mixed methods as its dominant strategy. The mixed methods in the context of this research include naturalistic inquiry, structured and unstructured interviews, questionnaire-based online and offline surveys, researcher as an instrument, etc. Since the topic, focus and scope of research have a descriptive characteristic; it appears reasonable to maintain a clear contrast with formal approaches. Confronted by a broad range of issues the present work has followed a number of research instruments and techniques. They include reading and analysis of available literature, collection of relevant data, description and classification of data and experimental studies on human subjects. The methodology pertinent to the present work has the following dimensions that appear in various chapters.

- a) Justification: it refers to preparation of ground for research,
- b) Focus: it relates to determining the researchable,
- c) Theorising: it means the analysis of relevant theories
- d) Collection: it refers to obtaining a raw corpus of humorous texts
- e) Classification: it relates to enrichment of the corpus through transcription and annotation
- f) Description: it means discussion on the structure and conceptual aspects
- g) Experimentation: it concerns the use of specific data for psycholinguistic experiments.

It is important to state that at no point the study has attempted to undermine, reduce or damage the reputation of the human individuals who acted as legitimate members and participants in the humour experiments.

The Chapter One bearing the title *Introduction* prepares the ground for linguistic research on verbal humour. It presents the discussion and argumentation following the objectives of this study. These discussions and arguments focus on the need for and suitability of verbal humour as a researchable issue within cognitive linguistic frameworks. Following the presentation protocols, it outlines the contents of the chapters very briefly.

The Chapter Two bearing the title *Earlier Works on Humour-Linguistics Interface: A Review* follows appraisal and evaluation methods for academic texts on verbal humour and other issues relevant to it.^v This chapter presents readings and discussions on earlier works on the issue of verbal humour and their relevance for this thesis. Since the phenomenon of verbal humour is big and diverse, the works concerning verbal humour and its sub-genres are also aplenty. This chapter primarily reports those that concern the topic of this thesis.

The Chapter Three bearing the title *Theoretical Approaches to Verbal Humour* is a critical evaluation of the humour theories. It adopts the discussion method to highlight the advantages and disadvantages of various humour theories. The main focus of this chapter is on those theories that have developed on cognitive linguistic frameworks.

The Chapter Four bearing the title *The Linguistic Mechanisms of Verbal Humour* is an analysis of verbal humour.^{vi} It follows ‘collect, classify and describe’ methods. The analysis involving collection, classification and description requires building an

exhaustive corpus. Obviously, such a corpus should include samples representing most diverse instantiations of verbal humour. The present research created a database of ten corpora containing classified and unclassified samples of verbal humour utilising various media. The instances of verbal humour such as jokes, puns, riddles, spoof, satire, parody, cartoon, etc. that qualified for inclusion in this thesis have come from print and online repositories. This chapter involved a massive search for the humour of various types. Consequently, it built a corpus of about twenty thousand instances of language manipulation that would qualify as verbal humour. In addition, this chapter measures the readability of humorous texts. For this measurement, it makes use of the Fry Readability Graph and Lix Readability Scale.

The Chapter Five bearing the title *The Cognitive Mechanisms of Verbal Humour* deals with the following: Analysis of various proposals emanating from the cognitive linguistic standpoint and empirical studies.^{vii} The empirical studies undertook profiling of participants, psycholinguistic experiments comprising rating, ranking and interpretation tasks. For profiling of the participants, the technique suitable is the use of Fundamental Interpersonal Orientation – Behaviour (FIRO-B) instrument and Jokes and I (JaI) scale. For empirical study, the method applicable is the use of exploratory psycholinguistic experiments on specific sub-genres of verbal humour. This also entails the application of methods that are in best position to elicit relevant data. Accordingly, for studying gelotophobia, it uses self-directed humour in several forms whereas for language preference in bilingual humour processing it uses code-mixed humour on different issues. The instances of verbal humour embodying ethnic, sexual, professional and political connotations, etc. did not become part of the experiments. The research design ensured that no factor other than the linguistic factors affects the participants' responses.

The Chapter Six bearing the title *Conclusions* presents summary and conclusions of the research. This chapter also presents the general and specific outcomes of empirical studies that formed part of the thesis. In addition, it offers some discussion on the tasks that have remained unaccomplished and gives insights on the advancement of future research on verbal humour. Therefore, the methodology applicable to this chapter includes textual discussions and diagrammatic illustrations.

1.4.1. Sources of Data and Selection of Data

The instances of verbal humour spread across this chapter and the entire thesis have come from various online, published and unpublished sources. A significant percentage of them came in the form of Short Message Service (SMS), posts on social media, and emails. Many of them have featured in humour related theses, textbooks, research papers and online repositories. While some are canned jokes and popular/traditional riddles, others are partially modified versions of some older forms of verbal humour.

Since most instances of verbal humour exist in the public domain, it is hard to ascertain their origin and propriety unless they originate from some particular retrievable and authentic source. This research has cited the source of all such examples of verbal humour for which an authentic or authoritative source was available. If the retrievable and genuine sources were missing or it was difficult to ascertain them, the examples have appeared without their sources. In addition, for obvious reasons, they have appeared without source of origin in the experiments carried out and reported in Chapter Five. In all occurrences, none of the individual instantiations represents the views of the researcher. Their inclusion as examples is purely an academic exercise.

1.5. Scope, Significance and Limitations

Research concerning on humour have come quite early in the human intellectual history. The last three decades of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century have also seen numerous and varied initiatives to decode the mysteries of humour in general and verbal humour in particular. A significant rise in the publication of books and number of doctoral theses bear testimony to that. Keeping this in mind, what could be the significance of the present research? This question is important because the increasing interest of researchers and scientists in a phenomenon like humour points to an important question: is the research available on humour inadequate to explain the issue? If they are adequate, can they answer the following questions?

- a) In what ways language does enhance or restrict the experience of funniness?
- b) What ambiguity is just appropriate for an instance of humour to be funny?
- c) How much creativity should a person have to create or comprehend a joke?
- d) How much should the contexts differ to give humorous results?

Most theories of humour are arguably theories relevant to humour and not theories of humour per se. The reason behind maintaining this distinction is that a majority of the theories of humour have originated in the disciplines that recognise humour as a very trivial sub-component of their project. This way the application of the theories of humour also does not find a place in many types of research.

The present study acknowledges that last recent times have seen a considerable rise in the involvement of researchers in decoding the ways of humour. However, a significant issue that remains unaddressed is that a universal theory of humour has yet not come. This fact points at two possibilities:

- (a) The theories at disposal are ad hoc theories or
- (b) They are not robust.

Perhaps both the facts hold true for humour, for barring a few most theories of humour have originated in some other discipline. Their application to humour is an over-extension and experimental. Therefore, the need for the development of new theories that can explain the phenomenon of humour in better ways remains valid. This research seeks its significance in serving this need in some respects. It does not claim to provide a universal theory of humour, but it promises to explicate the phenomenon of verbal humour in a more reliable way than what is available.

One of the reasons behind the constant increase in the theories of humour is that no particular theory explains the phenomenon in a comprehensive way. In fact, no theory is in a position to explain even a small component, say jokes, pun or riddle in a wholesome manner.

This thesis places its investigative foci on the minuscule of issues that point to the research possibilities with humour. Consider, for instance, *Humour and language*, *Humour and aesthetics*, *Humour and translation*, *Humour and cognition*, *Humour and health*, *Humour and pedagogy*, *Humour and machines*, *Humour and culture* just to name a few. Though the list is only indicative, one can conclude that hardly anything falls outside the ambit of humour. Even if this claim appears far too ambitious, it will not be wrong to say that the research possibilities with humour are as high as that with language or culture or philosophy. The outcome of such research engagements

The present research focusses on the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour. Verbal humour is a cover term for all instances of humorous jokes, wordplays, wits, irony, sarcasm, satire, one-liners, quotes, etc. However, it surpasses the

scope of this research to study all of them in the same measure. Therefore, the primary motif of the present research is to look at the instances of jokes that circulate through text messages, emails and day-to-day social interactions. This thesis considers all these examples of humorous language use as raw materials that are suitable for research. Therefore, it has not focussed on any particular literary work, a piece of prose, poetry or novel. The instances of jokes have numerous antecedents. Some of them are more striking than the rest. However, it is hard to treat any particular aspect of the joke as the most salient aspect of all or a typical response as the most typical response of all. This thesis concentrates on some aspects and leaves out other for the constraints of time.

1.5.1. Apprehensions and justification

Numerous scholars have raised concerns about the relevance of scientific pursuits in decoding the mystery of humour. One of their concerns is that it is incurably difficult, as the phenomenon has cultural underpinnings besides being highly diverse and non-static in nature and characteristics. Another concern is that such a pursuit would negatively affect the most significant aspect of humour, funniness. Besides, another concern is that the researchers would stop enjoying the instances of humour. Lew (1996: 6) lists some such apprehensions. However, the present work puts aside these apprehensions and sustains a pursuit through scientific methodology and academic concerns. Humour may act as an authentic contributor in understanding human intellectual, emotional and creative processes (Veale 1996: 131).

1.6. Outline of the Thesis

The most interesting thing about verbal humour is that they are interesting while the simplest thing about verbal humour is that they are not as simple as they appear to be. Their relevance is also far higher than usually assumed. Verbal humour has accompanied human interactions across time and cultures. It is present in human interactions in the real as well as virtual space; it is available in the formal as well as informal settings. Since it is virtually omnipresent, its nature and function also have become diverse. In that case, what can a thesis on verbal humour do? Following are the probable answer to this question:

- a) Assemble them in diverse manifestations
- b) Observe their linguistic and socio-cultural aspects
- c) Describe and analyse their architectures
- d) Classify and theorise them using scientific parameters
- e) Rewrite them to bring brevity
- f) Relay them for experimental findings

This thesis including the research reported in it is an attempt in that direction. Following is the content map.

1.6.1. Chapter 1: Introduction: Situating Verbal Humour in Linguistics

The first chapter introduces humour research as a scientific pursuit and verbal humour as an indispensable component of it. It seeks to demonstrate humour research as a multidisciplinary study that is highly compatible with language sciences. The verbal humour such as jokes, wits, puns, satires and riddles are marvellous phenomena of language and mind and therefore they are relevant to linguistic research. During the last

few decades of the twentieth century, there has been a deluge in the research publication on humour. However, linguistics overall has failed to engage with this highly suitable research candidate. This chapter argues that the linguistic structure and cognitive substance of verbal humour merit recognition in Linguistics and more specifically in Applied Linguistics. This chapter discusses how verbal humour cooperates with disciplines outside and sub-disciplines within linguistics. It takes into account how humour has interested the experts from the fields of Linguistics, Psychology, Philosophy, Theatre Arts, Cognitive and Computer Sciences. However, its particular focus rests on the interface between verbal humour and various sub-disciplines of linguistics such as Semantics, Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Language Pedagogy, Discourse and Computational Linguistics. This chapter voices the need for the creation and enrichment of humour database. Finally, it introduces the relatively new genre of bilingual or code-mixed humour and emphasises on the psycholinguistic study of the same.

The phenomenon of humour has close links with laughter and aesthetics. The very mention of the term ‘humour’ reminds of funny experiences and evokes a feeling of pleasantness. As socio-cultural product also, it has existed in all human communities. However, this was not enough to develop humour into an issue worth formal analysis. This view does not undermine the research concerning humour undertaken by disciplines like Anthropology, Culture Studies, Literature, Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology. Nevertheless, a phenomenon as visible and humane as humour deserves an existence of its own. At no point in the history of human civilisation, Humour Studies received adequate attention. Of late, scholars have started to realise the disciplinary merits of humour and identify the strands of research possible in it. As a result, Humour Studies as a discipline is still evolving. This fact about humour has an active dimension too because it has enabled humour research the advantage of intersections from several disciplines.

1.6.2. Chapter 2: Earlier Works on Humour-Linguistics Interface: A Review

This chapter surveys the existing body of scholarship on verbal humour. It briefly describes the concept of humour and the approaches adopted by the humour researchers from various disciplinary affiliations. The chapter presents a review of literature on those forms and aspects of humour that have relevance to the topic of the present research. Since research publications on humour are vast and diverse, the focus of this chapter has remained on such works that have received critical acclaims in humour research and are directly related to the topic. They include books, research articles, dissertations, conference papers and repositories.

1.6.3. Chapter 3: Theoretical Approaches to Verbal Humour

This chapter presents the theoretical debates centring around humour in general and verbal humour in particular. At the onset, it may appear as an extension of the previous chapter. However, its independent status is justifiable because it entirely dedicates to the theories of humour. At first, it argues why it is necessary to theorise verbal humour and then describes the major approaches that are prevalent in the classification of humour theories. In this discussion, this chapter also renames the classification of humour theories. Accordingly, it clubs the theories of humour into the following groups (a) Superiority-Inferiority Theories, (b) Aggression-Relief Theories and (c) Cognitive-Linguistic Theories. Next, it discusses various theories of humour. However, the focus of

this discussion remains on the Cognitive-Linguistic theories such as Semantic Script Theory of Humor, General Theory of Verbal Humor, Surprise Disambiguation Models, Normal Violation and Benign Violation Theories. In addition, it also discusses some ad hoc theories such as Conceptual Blending, Relevance Theory, Optimum Innovation Hypothesis and Theory of Lexical Priming. These theories have originated in Philosophy, Philosophy and Cognitive Sciences but they are relevant to the analysis of humour production and humour comprehension. The latter part of this chapter contemplates on the plurality of humour theories and the gaps in the contemporary humour theories. This chapter offers a smooth transition to the two core chapters of the present thesis.

1.6.4. Chapter 4: The Linguistic Mechanisms of Verbal Humour

The term VERBAL HUMOUR would refer to all and only such utterances or expressions or interactions that are funny and the funniness arises in them primarily due to language manipulation, not due to socio-cultural stereotypes, bias, etc. The linguistic analysis of verbal humour can provide useful insights into the working of the human language. Goldstein (1990: 38) finds immense interest in verbal humour because it can provide valuable leads in the study of human language systems.

The fourth chapter focuses on the linguistic mechanisms of verbal humour in its diverse forms. First, it discusses the title and presents verbal humour in its distinct identities. Then, it justifies the need for a linguists' involvement in the phenomena of verbal humour. After that, it deals with a representative data of verbal humour that is prevalent in day-to-day interactions today. This section classifies the various instances of verbal humour from the linguistic vantage point. Finally, it analyses the diverse forms of verbal humour to demonstrate how language manipulations take place at different levels to result in humorous phenomena. The available categories will be assessed against the types of humorous data. And, as the thesis title suggests this chapter intends to explore the linguistic mechanisms of verbal humour and provide insight into what makes a verbal humour tick.

1.6.5. Chapter 5: Cognitive Correlates of Verbal Humour

A majority of our cyber & cell phone communications or *e*-mails comprises of forwarded e-mails & SMS. Why is it so? Because they amuse us, make us laugh, and we find them funny. Some components essential to these mini humorous texts include creative language use, context sensitivity, dual/multiple interpretations and incongruity of meanings. They are universally present because they always keep adapting to new technology. Most importantly there are no propriety issues with these instances of humour. A person proficient in language ought to understand such uses. A proficient language user should be able to judge whether a stimulus is humorous or not. S/he should also be able to say how funny the particular stimulus is in comparison to some other stimuli. S/he should be able to locate the word/phrase that is causing the humorous ambiguity.

Most scholars agree that that verbal humour such as puns, riddles, tongue twisters and jokes are unique kinds of language use that appear creative and funny in a specific set of contexts. It is also conventional wisdom that human beings possess the competence that enables them to perceive and respond to these circumstances and the creative and humorous stimuli therein. From social and cognitive perspectives, this skill for humour plays a significant role in the experience of funniness and creativity. It attests the

presence of funniness in things that are deformed, strange, exaggerated, contradictory, unbelievable, incongruent, etc. That is to say, humans find amusements and tend to laugh at things that are incongruent to their belief/ bias, irregular regarding prototypes, unfamiliar or even stereotypical, self-contradictory and so on and so forth. This chapter looks into the cognitive aspects of the verbal humour. It examines the identification, comprehension, and response to humorous stimuli through psycholinguistic experiments. With this, it intends to study the following:

- a. Humour orientation and general creativity
- b. Humour recall and humour creativity
- c. Humour experience on humour response
- d. Experimental findings on the cognitive aspects of humour use
- e. The processing of literal, non-literal and humorous language use
- f. The processing of monolingual and code-mixed jokes
- g. The participants' proficiency in the languages they speak
- h. The processing of verbal humour against verbal-visual humour

The experiments considered all necessary steps to ensure that the factors that affect the ratings of jokes and identification of funny elements are the only factors that influence them. These measures provided that no other factor such as 'emotional baggage' linked with the jokes, orthographies of the languages involved, the time duration of a joke, etc., influences the experiment tasks.

The response that various instances of verbal humour evoke has conversational as well as behavioural connotations. The behavioural and affective aspects are significant to the pedagogical situations and team works. The conversational side of the verbal humour includes the rating and ranking based on the experience of funniness, identification of the jabline/punchline and interpretation of the incongruous aspects of the information sets available in the stimuli.

1.6.6. Chapter 6: Conclusions

The final chapter presents the concluding remarks on the issues relevant to the topic and theme of this research. This chapter presents summary observations and makes closing statements from the description and analysis of structural aspects and findings of the experiments. It also sheds light on the prospective areas where the results of the present work can practically fit. Finally, it shows directions for future research in this area. The contents following this chapter include bibliographic references to the relevant texts and the appendices. The appendices contain the following:

- a) The questionnaires and calculators that apply to the profiling of the participants who undertook humour experiments.
- b) Informed consent form.
- c) Hindi-English bilinguals' self-evaluation form
- d) Experiment-wise sets of verbal humour.

1.7. Summary

This thesis argues that verbal humour is a highly suitable candidate for research in Linguistics. The term verbal humour is not a euphemistic synonym for jokes of a particular category. Rather, it is the representative term for a host of phenomena such as puns, riddles, tongue twisters, one-liners, quotes, jokes just to name a few. The present

thesis has aimed at a harmonious blend of insights from Linguistics and Cognitive Sciences to test theories of verbal humour and study individual orientations to humour use through psycholinguistic experiments. This thesis aims to build a coherent understanding of humour and language interface and contribute towards fullness and accuracy of the knowledge about the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour. There is a bi-directional causal relationship between the linguistic mechanisms and the cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour. It is not possible for one to exist without the other. Therefore, this thesis investigates both these mechanisms in two distinct but compatible chapters. The present chapter has introduced the issue and highlighted its significance in the linguistic and cognitive sciences. The chapters that follow aim at a coherent documentation of the intellectual work on the subject of verbal humour, listing of specific and ad hoc theories of verbal humour and stimulation of intellectual debates involving the linguistic structures and cognitive correlates of verbal humour.

ⁱ The spelling of term humour is ‘humour’ in the British conventions and humor in the American conventions. This thesis has followed the British convention. However, in references and citations it has followed the spelling of the original author/work.

ⁱⁱ FIRO-B and JaI are self-revealing tests. FIRO-B is a standard scale for measuring personality dispositions while JaI measures the test takers’ orientation towards jokes.

ⁱⁱⁱ In this research it VH refers to a set of phenomena including jokes, puns, riddles, tongue twisters, fake headlines, one-liners etc. In most literature this terms refers to jokes only.

^{iv} See Veale (1993, 2003 & 2004) and Chiaro (2005 & 2008). VEH is co-terminus with VH.

^v Such works that have direct relevance to the objectives of this research.

^{vi} Linguistic mechanisms in this thesis refer to structural and conceptual aspects of verbal humour.

^{vii} Cognitive mechanisms in this research refer to a set of psychological phenomena and response to humorous stimuli that demanded identification, rating and ranking.

Chapter 2

Earlier Works on Humour-Linguistics Interface: A Review

2.1. Introduction

Verbal humour finds its place among the most important constituents of human beings' social and virtual interactions. This chapter reviews the literature on verbal humour. The research on humour is vast and varied in nature. Therefore, this review restricts itself to research works that are relevant to the objectives stated in the previous chapter. Accordingly, the first section of this chapter discusses the literature that highlight the need for the inclusion of humour in research. In addition to justifying the inclusion of humour in research, this section also discusses the literature that treats verbal humour as a genre, classifies it and discusses its linguistic and cognitive aspects. The next section focuses on the research works that have emerged in various autonomous and hybrid disciplines like Sociology, Philosophy, Education, Computer Sciences, Literature, Linguistics and Cognition. The next section presents a critique of humour research prevalent today. The main dimensions of the critique include the lesser and poorer attention the linguistic, psycholinguistic, cognitive and inter-cultural aspects of verbal humour have received in the research literature. The final sections discuss the literature concerning the Linguistic and Cognitive Mechanisms. In human-human interactions, the use of humour and laughter is an unexceptionable phenomenon. In such interactions, humour appears in several forms and performs several functions. While for the nonprofessional the form and functions of humour appears lucid and trivial, for the scholars they are highly intriguing and enigmatic. This dual nature of humour has attracted a plethora of research for a long time. This chapter presents an overview of Humour Research from various disciplinary angles.

2.2. Macro-dynamics and micro-dynamics of the humorous phenomena

This section deals with the macro-dynamics and micro-dynamics of a humorous phenomenon. The macro-dynamics of a humorous phenomenon refers to the generic and peripheral aspects such as ethnicity, gender, class, literacy, citizenship etc., of the target of the humour. The macro-dynamics operates at the larger level. In contrast, the micro-dynamics of a humour humorous phenomenon refers to the specific aspects such as punning riddles and word plays. From the processing perspective, it is interesting to observe how the introduction of new stimuli affects the experience of humour. The question relevant to this kind of observation is how the arrival of new variety of humour enhance/inhibit the experience of funniness. The new stimuli can come at macro as well as micro level. This kind of observation attends to the question of creativity, an inquiry that this research will take up later.

2.3. The phenomenon of humour; its definitions and classifications

Though the phenomena of humour have featured in numerous research writings around the globe, most scholars have expressed inability to define what humour means, its boundaries and contexts. Therefore, the phenomenon of humour presents a serious definitional challenge. The present research concentrates on the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour. Obviously, its key concept 'humour' needs an elaboration.

Humour is a variegated term and it is difficult to define it. Scholars in humour research as well as in other traditional disciplines agree that it is undefinable¹. However, this does not mean that there were no attempts to define humour. In fact, in a majority of initiatives to define humour, one can notice a common thread: it evokes funniness and elicits laughter.

“Humor may be easier to recognize than to define, but among its current meanings are (a) the playful recognition, enjoyment, and/or creation of incongruity; (b) a composed and cheerful view on adversity that allows one to see its light side and thereby sustain a good mood; (c) the ability to make others smile or laugh.” (Paterson and Seligman 2004: 584)

Concerning the definition of humour the literature presents a dichotomous picture. On the one hand some scholars have chosen not to define humour. On the other hand, some others have offered an extensive inventory of terms relating to the phenomenon. Raskin is a distinct scholar among them and according to him humour is a cumulative product of some factors working together.

2.3.1. The term and its connotations

There is a range of phenomena that the term humour can refer to and a number of technical terms have humour as an ingredient that defines them. Lynch (2002: 423) observes that humour has no boundaries. A host of terms have served to account for the phenomenon of humour.

“Humor is a term which may be used in both a wide and a narrow sense. In the wider sense, it is applied to all literature and to all informal speech or writing in which the object is to amuse, or rouse laughter in, the reader or hearer. In its narrower sense, humor is distinguished from wit, satire, and farce.” Monro (1988: 349)

Most scholars have argued that the term humour, in the contexts in which it exists today, emerged only in the medieval times. The etymological search confirms that earlier the term did not refer to what it refers to now. This does not mean that the phenomena did not exist earlier. In fact, an important point to note here is that the phenomenon has existed all along the history of human beings’ intrapersonal, interpersonal and group interactions. Besides, the performance of comic plays as early as 4 BC and its references in the writings of Aristotle and Plato in Europe and Bharata Muni in India confirm that the phenomenon was significant and the scholars of that era were aware of its roles in social life. Their treatises offer elaborate discussions on how comic plays use to include elements from everyday life to cause laughter and amusement.

“A rich set of phenomena relating to humor has been accumulated in different cultures, and numerous words for their description have come into use.” Peterson & Seligman (2004: 585)

Ruch (2007: 9) presents an elaborate historical account of the term ‘humour’ and the journey it has taken from its origin to what it stands for today. Ruch discusses the etymological and semantic changes the term ‘humour’ has undergone through various phases. Therefore, it is pertinent to look at what all concepts associate with humour today by looking at the semantic field of the term humour.

“There exist two different and conflicting terminological systems. The first comes from the field of aesthetics, where the comic – defined as that which makes someone laugh or feel amused – is distinguished from other

aesthetic qualities like beauty or harmony. In this tradition humor is one element of the comic – along with wit, fun, nonsense, sarcasm, ridicule, satire, irony, and so on – and usually denotes a cognitive-affective style of dealing with adverse situations by finding them amusing. The second use of the term humor is an umbrella for all funny phenomena, including the capacities to perceive, interpret, enjoy, create, and relay incongruous communications. In this usage, humor has replaced comic as the overarching term.” Peterson & Seligman (2004: 585)

Evidently, the term humour has several connotations, one of which refers to a feature of an individual’s personality. This aspect of its meaning has led to the emergence of several comparable terminologies that offer to serve as synonyms for humour (Raskin 1985). Among them the term ‘wit’ has often replaced the term humour.

“At the beginning of the 19th century, the conceptual distinction between wit and humor was complete. Wit referred to a cognitive ability and was hurtful. Humor came from the heart and was benevolent.” Peterson & Seligman (2004: 586)

Funniness is the defining feature of humour. Arguably, a definition of humour is incomplete if it does not include funniness in it. Despite having origins and affiliations in diverse streams of thought, the humour theories too cannot afford to exclude funniness. Perceivably, funniness emerged as the criterion for a piece of humour; greater the funniness in it, higher the ratings it gets. However, it is a subjective phenomenon as in the experience of funniness varies from individual to individual.

“Humor is a quintessentially social phenomenon. Jokes and other humorous utterances are a form of communication that is usually shared in social interaction. These humorous utterances are socially and culturally shaped, and often quite particular to a specific time and place. And the topics and themes people joke about are generally central to the social, cultural and moral order of a society or a social group.” Kuipers (2008: 365)

Until today no transhistorical cause of laughter and no transhistorical definition for a joke has emerged in research.

“If one of the main problems seems to be the ‘nature’ of the object of analysis itself, another problem is that in scholarly literature about humour, the comic, and laughter these terms are either used without clear definitions or the definitions given are contradictory. It seems that what one scholar calls humour, another defines as belonging to the comic.” Horlacher (2009: 20)

Regarding the distinction between humour and wit Morreall (1983) observes humour is something that is observed while wit originates in the observer’s mind. Bergler (1956) listed more than 80 theories of laughter. Apte (1985) attributes the following three features to humour:

“(a) Sources that act as potential stimuli, (b) The cognitive and intellectual activity responsible for the perception and evaluation of these sources leading to humour experience, and (c) Behavioral responses that are expressed as smiling or laughter or both.”

According to Ritchie (2010: 34)

“A recurring observation about humour conveyed in language is that there are two broad classes of textual humorous items. Referential (or conceptual) humour uses language to convey some meaning (e.g. a story, a description of a situation or event) which is itself the source of humour, regardless of the medium used to convey it. Verbal humour, on the other hand, relies on the particular language used to express it, so that it may use idiosyncratic features of the language (such as which words sounds alike, or which sentence structures are ambiguous).”

The distinction between Referential and Verbal humour is not a strict one and the boundary between them is quite blurred. However, this distinction helps in the analysis and interpretation of humorous texts.

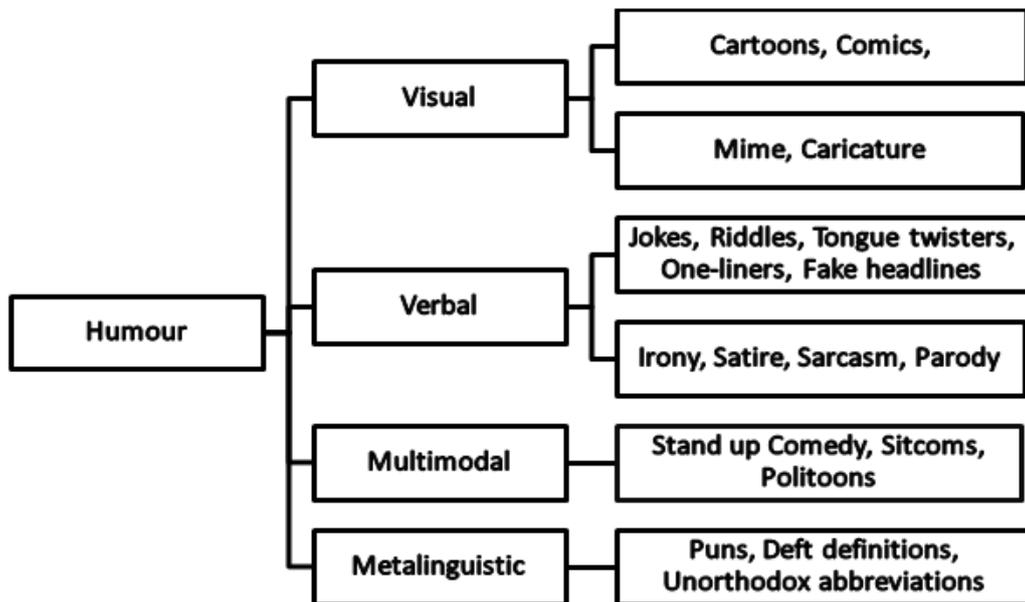


Illustration 2.1: Types of humour

Lynch (2002: 423) divides the humour literature into two broad classes. The first category consists of humour literature dealing with individual factors while the second category consists of humour literature dealing with social factors. The three main aspects of humour research that emerge are as follows:

- a) Structure – what causes fun in humour
- b) Operation – how people use humour and react to it
- c) Reflections – what people think about humour

2.3.2. What makes a speech act an instance of verbal humour?

Humour researchers in contemporaneous times and in past have concentrated on what makes a speech act an exemplar of verbal humour. Most of them agree that the presence of perceivable funniness in the speech act qualifies it as an instance of verbal humour. Considering ‘funniness’ as the default criterion for a speech act to qualify as verbal humour raises the following pertinent question: what makes a humorous speech act

funny? Conceivably, this question has multiple explanations that would naturally focus on the socio-cultural and cognitive aspects.

2.3.3. Humour and laughter

One of the most intriguing aspects of verbal humour is that it evokes laughter. Several humour scholars have emphasized that theoretical postulations and treatise concerning humour existed as early as 3rd and 4th BC. It is important to note that almost all these scholars have considered humour and laughter as the same. It is for this reason that they have treated the theories of laughter as the theories of humour. Their treatment of humour and laughter as one is natural because the term ‘humour’ came later than such treatise and what matters the most is how robust is their argument and how vivid is their description. Even though laughter is the most significant outcome of humour, the modern scholars prefer to make a distinction between the terms ‘humour’ and ‘laughter’ (Vaid 2002). Accordingly, the early treatises of humour were indeed treatises of laughter and not of humour. Treating humour and laughter as one, Castelvetroⁱⁱ offers the following four conditions that may cause laughter:

- a) The sight of people dear to us
- b) Deceptions through any of the following reasons:
 - i. Ignorance of customs, madness, drunkenness
 - ii. Ignorance of arts or sciences, and boasting
 - iii. Wilful misinterpretations and witty retorts
 - iv. Chance and intentional deceptions
- c) Evil and physical disgrace presented under cover
- d) Sex

Casltevetro’s sources of laughter are diverse and may succeed in accounting for several humorous phenomena. However, they do not constitute necessary and sufficient conditions for humour or laughter to occur.

“Within discourse analysis, humor and laughter have both been a topic of research and interest, but historically they were treated marginally ... Until now, there has been no up-to-date synthesis of the various strands of research in discourse analysis of humor and laughter.” Attardo (2015: 168)

Quite often deviation from norms/patterns evokes a certain kind of novel response in one’s cognitive behaviour, resulting in laughter. Therefore, what people laugh at will not provide any authoritative explanation about humour. The individual instances of verbal humour like joking, tongue twisters, wits, punning, wordplays and riddles are linguistic and conceptual entities, but their biophysical product is mostly laughter. Most scholars in past do not seem to differentiate between humour and laughter. Therefore, their theories of laughter are same as that of the theories of humour. However, in the process they have provided workable explanations to both humour and laughter. Most scholars agree that laughter is a physiological behaviour that humour can evoke (Vaid 2002 & Raskin 1985).

“Laughter has been by far the object of more research than humor, both within and outside the conversation or discourse analysis paradigm. Laughter and humor are not co-extensive. Laughter is not a physical manifestation of humor. Laughter may be spontaneous and uncontrolled, but it may also be voluntary.” Attardo (2015: 170)

Arguably, this physiological behaviour may arise due to other factors also (Vaid 2002). Morreall (1983) considers humour as a kind of laughter situation and argues that laughter is not an emotion. Morreall (1983: 60) notes that humour differs from simpler kinds of laughter stimuli because it is based on conceptual shift. Hazlitt (see Raskin 1985: 2) lists many factors such as absurdity, deformity etc. that are responsible for laughter. An understanding common among the humour researchers today is that humour and laughter can occur without each other. That is to say, humour need not precede or follow laughter. The same holds true for humour and pleasure. Humour can be a causal factor for laughter and pleasure to take place, but not all experiences of laughter and pleasure need to emanate from the experience of humour. In addition, the following points need to be noted:

- (a) Instances of laughter are not always the physical manifestations of humour. Laughter can occur without humour also.
- (b) From a conversational analysis standpoint, laughter sometimes functions as rapport builder.
- (c) Laughter has found more space in research literature than humour. A plausible reason for laughter finding more mentions than humour in Psychology, Philosophy and Literary research could be due to the fact that most research in past have treated humour and laughter as one.
- (d) Laughter arising due to the experience of humour is different from the laughter arising from tickling, fear, disgust and/or other factors because the humorous laughter necessitates the identification and appreciation of incongruity.

2.3.4. The genre of humour and its hybridity

The term 'humour' is centuries old and its semantic function has undergone considerable change over these centuries. Most scholars agree that earlier the term humour referred to bodily fluids.

“The term humor has a long history, although it did not enter the field of the comic and funny until the late 16th century. For centuries prior, humors referred to bodily fluids: blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. The mixture of these four humors in given people was expressed in their physical appearance, physiognomy, and proneness to disease.”
Paterson and Seligman (2004: 583-598)

The genre of verbal humour has been the subject matter of prolific research in the first decade of the 21st century. Scholars from various disciplinary affiliations have focused on the types of verbal jokes. The contemporary research on Humour acknowledges that humour represents a vast and distinct spectrum of phenomena that exist in assorted genres of human interactions. For convenience, humour performers and humour scholars have identified modality as a defining characteristic of the genre. Accordingly, categories such as verbal humour, visual humour, figural humour and aural humour have emerged.

A notable point concerning humour and its sub-genres is that they do not constitute a single definable concept. More often than not, something that qualifies as an instance of humour also qualifies as something else in society. In this perspective, various instances of humour simultaneously submit to multiple memberships. Therefore, a joke or

a one-liner is a piece of humour but at the same time, it tells about culture and society and reflects important things about them.

2.3.5. Humour in academic research

If one goes by dates, research concerning humour has come quite early in the human intellectual history. However, the research on humour has a distinct and dichotomous history.

“The questions of what makes people laugh and what constitutes 'humour' have been under discussion for a long time – certainly since Plato (Philebos) and probably before.” Ulrike (2002: 1)

Though researchers have pondered over the phenomenon of humour since the ancient times, there is still no single coherent theory of humour in the 21st Century. Even though Greek and Sanskrit intellectual traditions discuss some aspects of the phenomenon in elaborate details, they lack the adequacy and robustness that are necessary for a comprehensive description.

The credit for introducing humour into the Linguistics should go to Victor Raskin's pioneering work with the title *The Semantic Mechanisms of Verbal Humor*. The decades of 1980s and 1990s proved highly productive for interchange between Humour Research and Linguistics. The humour research in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw the involvement of psychoanalytic techniques with Freud being the leading figure among the researchers. Most of the studies during this era considered the terms wit and humour as conceptually distinct entities.

The last three decades of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century have also seen numerous and varied initiatives to decode the mysteries of humour in general and verbal humour in particular. A significant rise in the publication of books and award of doctoral theses bear testimony to that. Raskin's (1985, 2009), Raskin & Attardo (1991), Attardo (1994, 2001 & 2015) and Ruch's (2007) generated great enthusiasm among the humour researchers and ushered a constant inflow of publications on humour. This trend is so noticeable that one can compare it with that which followed Chomsky's (1957, 1965) works. Arguably, there has been a considerable rise in humour researchers in last few decades. Several scholars have observed this rise and mentioned it in their research. Martin (2007) notes:

“Over the past two decades, there has been a steady accumulation of research on the topic of humor. Researchers in the areas of social, cognitive, developmental, biological and applied psychology (i.e. clinical, educational, health) all have interesting contributions to make to the study of humor.” Martin (2007: 2)

Ulrike's (2002) thesis is an attempt to explain conversational acts in the contexts of laughter, jokes and humour. Ulrike worked on the British National Corpus employing conversation analysis technique to study the instances of laughter in natural speech and spontaneous interactions. Double (1991) is the first account of stand-up comedy as an academic research. It has mainly focused on the British stand-up comedy and emphasised on the significance of the cultural context concerning humour.

Attardo (2015: 168) categorises the development of ideas on humour and laughter by way of three-phase description: (a) the precursors (1974-85), (b) the functionalist phase (1985-2000), and (c) the corpus-synthesis phase (2000-present). However, as discussed in chapter one a universal theory of humour is yet to be formulated. There

could be two reasons: (a) the theories at disposal are ad hoc theories or (b) they are not robust. Perhaps both the reasons are true for humour, for most theories available for humour research have originated in some other discipline. Their application to humour is primarily an over-extension and experimental. Therefore, the need for the development of new theories that can explain the phenomenon of humour in better ways remains valid.

The phenomenon of humour has close links with laughter and aesthetics. The very mention of the term 'humour' reminds one of funny experiences and evokes a feeling of pleasantness. Schmitz (2009) approaches the issue of humour from perspectives of arts and aesthetic. As socio-cultural product also, it has existed in all human communities. However, this was not enough to develop humour into an issue worth formal analysis. This view does not undermine the research concerning humour undertaken by disciplines like Anthropology, Culture Studies, Literature, Philosophy, Psychology, and Sociology. Nevertheless, a phenomenon as visible and humane as humour deserves an existence of its own among the academic disciplines. This did not happen at any point of time in the human history. Though it is a less fortunate fact, it has a positive dimension too. This has enabled it the advantage of intersections from several disciplines. Of late, scholars have started to realize the disciplinary merits of humour and identify the strands of research possible in it. As a result, Humour Studies as a discipline is still evolving.

At this juncture it is important to recount Koestler (1964), which argues that humour, art, and science are similar as they all require divergent thinking and reformulation of the existing ideas (Belanger, Kirkpatrick & Derks 1998). Concerning creativity Koestler (1964 & 1989) concentrates on humour, science and arts. For these three phenomena, he argues that there is a common process running in the background while, its manifestations vary. These psychological aspects bring Humour Studies further closer to research in hard science as well as liberal arts.

2.4. The diverse contexts of verbal humour

It goes without saying that the occurrence of verbal humour has diverse contexts. The very fact that a host of disciplinary sciences participate in the speculative, theoretical and empirical studies concerning humour confirms that verbal humour can have several contexts. The use of the term 'context' here does not concern its literal meaning. Rather, it concerns the associations verbal humour has with various aspects of human life. These aspects significantly affect the appropriateness and quantification of humour use in speech communities. This section presents several contexts of verbal humour including; phylogenetic, socio-cultural, linguistic, cognitive, communicative, political, ethnic, organisational, and pedagogical just to name a few.

2.4.1. Verbal humour in phylogenetic context

Researchers in Biolinguistics have encountered questions such as the following: Do animals have language? In other words, is language exclusively a human endowment? The scholars in Linguistics and Psychology do not agree on the issue of human language and animal communication. While one group assigns language only to the human species, the other believes that animals too have language albeit not as refined as their human counterparts. Under these contradictory approaches, it is difficult to say anything about the phylogenetic context of verbal humour. It is important to consider verbal humour from the perspective of the design features of human language. Hockett proposed a set of

13 design features in 1960s to compare human language and animal communication. These features are as follows:

“Use of vocal-auditory channel, broadcast transmission and directional reception, rapid fading (transitoriness), interchangeability, total feedback, specialization, semanticity, arbitrariness, discreteness, traditional transmission, displacement, productivity, duality of patterning.”

Later Hockett and Altmann (1968) added prevarication, reflexiveness and learnability to the above list. Concerning the uniqueness of human language Chomsky (1957) offers ‘structure dependence’ and ‘recursion’ as two distinct characteristics of the human language. Though the contexts of Hockett’s design features and Chomsky’s unique properties of human language were to distinguish language from the animal communication, one can test the behaviour of verbal humour as to find out if it embodies them and conforms to them in certain demonstrable ways.

2.4.2. Verbal humour in linguistic and communicative contexts

It goes without attestation that language is the most significant component of verbal humour. Participants in an entertainment discourse manipulate the language at various levels and produce ambiguous constructions that finally result in humour and laughter.

“Language is perhaps the dominant medium of humorous expression. Verbal humour is, of course, linguistic by definition, but even visual humour in the form of cartoons can often derive its meaning from an underlying linguistic expression such as a conventional metaphor or idiom.” Veale (2004: 1)

Therefore, Linguistics is the most competent discipline to deal with the phenomenon of verbal humour. The use and experience of humour has direct and subtle bearings on the communication skills of an individual. Mihalcea (2007: 412) observes:

“Humour is one of the interesting and puzzling aspects of human behaviour, and it has been rightfully argued that it plays an important role in an individual’s development as well as in interpersonal communication.”

Those who use qualitatively as well as quantitatively distinct humour are better at communication skills while those who lack in praiseworthy communication skills also lack in the judicious use of humour. The expression judicious use of humour may refer to any of the following:

- a) use of humour appropriate to the occasion,
- b) right quantity of humour use
- c) humour that is relevant, that which fits into the conversation at hand
- d) use of humour that suits the perceptual levels of the interlocutors

Clearly, the above conditions indicate the number, context and interlocutors for the appropriateness of humour. Drawing from Grice (1975), Raskin (1985) offers a slightly different perspective to humour in communicative context. He treats joke telling as a non-bona-fide communication that can occur in four different situations.ⁱⁱⁱ The situations include:

“(a) The speaker makes the joke unintentionally, (b) The speaker makes the joke intentionally, (c) The hearer does not expect a joke and (d) The hearer expects a joke.” Raskin (1985: 100)

There are numerous studies confirming the facilitative role humour plays in the acquisition and exercise of communicative skills. A good speaker often has a stock of ready-to-use humour. The availability of humour also rescues persons from embarrassing situations.

2.4.3. Verbal humour in socio-cultural and ethnic contexts

Every piece of humour has a context. The context of humour decides not only what is funny and how much, but also what is not funny. Speech communities often involve in making of contempt and poking of fun either within themselves or at other communities. People involving in the creation of a humorous situation extend the socio-cultural rules. Sometimes, the violation is high, so high and that the social group that is at the receiving end may feel offended and retaliate. Therefore, the decision about the interpretation of verbal humour including its context and acceptability always rests with the socio-cultural groups that it belongs to or targets. Kuipers (2015) conducted a field study on jokes in Netherlands. She conducted interviews and surveys to explore various pertinent questions about jokes, sense of humour, individual style regarding jokes etc. She notes that gender, age and economic class have impact on Dutch people’s experience of jokes. She re-employed this methodology to study humour style of the US citizens. An important point about Kuiper’s study on jokes is that it throws light on cross-cultural and national differences on humour style.

The expression ‘ethnic humour’ denotes such instances of humour use that employ stereotypes prevalent against a group or community. According to Raskin (1985: 202)

“... there exists a large class of jokes targeted at collective rather than individuals or individual traits and the ethnic jokes proper constitute a subclass of that larger class.”

From the sociological perspectives, this is very common form of humour that downplays the reputation of social group or community by highlighting its ignorance, misfortune, poor worldview, cunningness, predictable behaviour etc. An important aspect of the ethnic humour is that it not only exhibits or exaggerates the stereotypes prevalent about the target community but also exhibits and exaggerates certain fictitious and mythical beliefs prevalent within the community. Therefore, the term ethnic humour should denote not only social stereotypes but also internal self-belief and collective aspirations of a speech community. Concerning the permissibility in racial, ethnic and gender humour, Rappoport (2005) is of the opinion that there should be freedom to use humour that target definable groups. It creates scope for interaction and exchange between and among them.

“Jokes which target particular outgroups, such as ethnic jokes, presumably involve the breaking of the approbation maxim, implicitly criticising this group, and illustrate aggression theories of humour. On the other hand, ritual insults between good friends express rapport.” Goatly (2013: 243)

However, Raskin (1985) in the *Semantic Mechanisms of Verbal Humor* presents a different perspective on this kind of humour.

“Unlike sexual humor, the basic type of script oppositeness used in ethnic humor is predominantly possible/impossible (and sometimes actual/non-actual) rather than normal/abnormal, and the essential feature most frequently utilized in ethnic jokes is good/bad rather than sexual/non-sexual. In other words, most of ethnic humor is functionally deprecatory, or disparaging.” Raskin (1985: 180)

Ethnic humour is a common type of humour. Structurally, an important aspect of this class of humour is that it involves both new as well conventional joke types. The Jewish humour, Polish jokes, Arab jokes are common examples at the international level. In India, Punjabi jokes offer the best examples for ethnic humour.^{iv} In fact, the very mention of Punjabi jokes (also popular as Sardarji jokes and Santa Banta jokes) trigger the imagination of humorous stupidity and misfortunes of the members of the Sikh community. An interesting fact about ethnic humour is that these instances of humour are not always assignable by external agencies. Rather, quite often they emerge from within the community itself. Therefore, often these ethnic jokes represent self-deprecatory humour at the community level. From the semantic point of view, Raskin (1985: 180) maintains that ethnic jokes present script oppositions through language distortion. In this case, the language use including the pronunciation habits, accent, style etc. become the butt of the jokes. Other aspects of ethnic humour in Raskin’s analysis include dumbness, stinginess, craftiness, cunningness, national superiority, antagonism, and hostility. An important aspect of the ethnic humour is that it does not form a strict class, that is to say that an example of ethnic humour can serve as an example of sexual or political humour as well. In this connection, Raskin (1985: 205) introduces an important point in the form of “pseudo” and “quasi-ethnic” jokes. Low (2010) calls it culture-specific obscurities. Raskin (1985: 207) offers the following set of criteria for what qualifies as ethnic humour:

“The joke is truly ethnic if and only if its main opposition or one of its main oppositions involves at least one truly ethnic script.

If the joke is truly ethnic, the removal of the evoked ethnic script renders it incomprehensible.

- a) If the joke is truly ethnic, it treats the individuals in it solely and entirely as members of the targeted ethnic group.
- b) If the joke is truly ethnic, the targeted ethnic group may be substituted for only by another ethnic group which shares the evoked ethnic script with it.” Raskin (1985: 207)

Laughter accompanying an ethnic joke does not mean dislike or insult to a group. According to Rappoport (2005: 150) it is an evidence of power humour has over the moral prescriptions of that group.

2.4.4. Verbal humour in sexual context

Sexual humour denotes instances of humour that involves implicit or explicit reference to sexual stereotypes, sexual role assignment, unnatural/abnormal sex, sexual prowess, sexual activity etc. Sexual humour unravels an axiomatic fact about humour, that is, humour on tabooed objects outnumbers humour of the other kinds.

Verbal humour in the context of sex and gender are not the same. The objects falling in the class of sexual humour need not illustrate the gender stereotypes always. Similarly, not all instances of gender-specific humour need to have sexual topics. It is

important to understand that gender-specific humour is a category that is related but separate from sexual humour. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Sexist jokes
i	A man advertised in the local classifieds: “Wife wanted”. Next day he received a hundred letters. They all said the same thing: “You can have mine.”
ii	Before marriage “made for each other” And, after marriage “mad because of each other”
iii	Chess says everything about husband and wife. The king can take one step at a time, But, the queen can do whatever she wants.
iv	Jađi kərne ər mobaıl k’hərıđne ke bađ ek hi bađ ka əfsos hođa he (There is a common regret after getting married and after purchasing a new mobile phone) kađ t’hođi đer rok dzađe to ət’st’ha mədı mıl dzađa (Had I had waited for some more time I would have got a good model)

Table 2.1: Sexist jokes

2.4.5. Verbal humour in political context

Jokes and cartoons serve as the vehicle for political ideas and actions. Perhaps that is why the cartoons caricatures and satires in newspapers and magazines attract a sizeable viewership. In fact, there is hardly any political decision that does not attract cartoons and jokes. Many instances of humour represent the politics, diplomacy between countries and ideologies of various kinds. Such instances of humour belong to political humour. Structurally, political humour resembles other categories of humour such as sexual humour and ethnic humour, but the context in which they occur makes them a distinct category of humour. Contextually, political humour concentrates on political ideals and decisions as well as politicians and their conducts. According to Raskin (1985: 222),

“Political humor is targeted at political leaders, professional politicians, or elected representatives as well as political institutions, groups and parties. In addition, political ideas and the life of entire societies under a political regime can be aimed at in political jokes.”

This class of humour comprises a huge set of jokes, cartoons and satirical writings. This huge set requires a further division. Raskin (1985: 222) classifies political humour into two groups (a) denigration jokes and (b) exposure jokes.

“The first class denigrates a person, a group, an idea, or the whole society. The second class is usually targeted at a political regime as a whole and contains a reference to an event or series of events which are not widely publicised, and quite actively suppressed by the regime.”

There can be a simpler division of political humour as well. As most political humour either promote or criticise a political idea or person, it appears logical to classify them as (i) jokes of political advocacy and (ii) jokes of political resistance.

Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Political jokes
i	Mrs. Sonia Gandhi visited the farmers whose crops had perished due to flood and storm. She promised them maximum support from the government. In between Rahul Gandhi was also interacting with the farmers. He asked the farmers why they prefer crops that perish. They should rather go for crops that can sustain flood and storm he suggested Mrs. Sonia Gandhi. After their interactions, the farmers collected some money and offered to Mrs. Gandhi. She was surprised and asked the reason for the money. The farmers replied “your crop has perished too, madam.
ii	During the general elections in 2014, there was a lot of clamour concerning the bringing back of the Indian money stashed abroad through fraudulent means. After the elections, people stopped asking for the money stashed abroad and started asking to bring back the prime minister from abroad. The reason was that the Prime Minister had started undertaking many foreign trips.

Table 2.2: Political jokes

2.4.6. Verbal humour in psychological and developmental contexts

The credit for psychoanalysis of jokes goes to Sigmund Freud. Freud was the first to observe the coordination of linguistic and psychological factors involved in the success of humour. He (1905/1960) gives especial emphasis on the linguistic mechanisms of jokes and analysed the following three types of humorous experience:

- a) Jokes; the phenomena that employ cognitive strategies such as displacement, dissonance, integration and resonance.
- b) Comic; the situations involving nonverbal plays, mirth and slapstick. and
- c) Humour; the conditions that normally associate with negative emotions such as fear, sadness or anger but can occur with amusement and pleasure too.

However, his ideas applied not only to jokes but also to language use. Besides, his main focus in *Jokes and their relation to the unconscious* rests on the psychological aspects like tension and relief. Therefore, his theory falls under relief theory of humour.

Following Freud, the modern psychological approaches tend to classify humorous phenomena in the following three ways: (a) As scatological, that is *dealing with excrement or dirt*, (b) As aggressive, that is *characteristic of enemy*, and (c) As sexual, that is *having or involving sexual behaviour*.

“The personality correlates of humor have received much attention. The early and narrowly conceptualized humor instruments usually correlated positively with extroversion and negatively with neuroticism.” Peterson & Seligman (2004: 592)

Children's humour (also known as Developmental Humour) is a universal phenomenon and an unexceptionable fact of an individual's maturation. It is a sub-field in the genre of children's literature. The socio-cultural, political and pedagogical factors make it a highly diverse and rewarding, but at the same time, an under-researched issue in Humanities as well as Social Sciences. Scanty publications in Humanities and the neglect of children's narratives in Sociological and Anthropological field-notes stand testimony to the above

claim. Children's humour has social, psychological, literary, linguistic, political as well as pedagogical dimensions.

The decades of 20 th century	Number of publications on children's humour
1900-1909	Two
1910-1919	Two
1920-1929	Nine
1930-1939	Twelve
1940-1949	Thirteen
1950-1959	Eight
1960-1969	Fourteen
1970s	One hundred and six +

Table 2.3: Publications on children's humour^v

Its linguistic and cognitive components offer inexhaustible resources for extracting newer findings about the working of the human mind. Children's humour can inform and enrich the research in Linguistics in diverse and demonstrable ways, however, to realize that the research community needs to engage with the genres of children's humour on a frequent basis. Crystal (2001: 159) raises four pertinent questions:

- a) Where does our fascination with language play come from?
- b) Why do we slip so naturally into it?
- c) Why do we find it so enjoyable being part of a playful linguistic interchange?
- d) Why is it so satisfying when we complete a language game successfully?

The above questions are significant because they have linguistic, cognitive and ontogenetic contexts. It is not easy to provide answers to them satisfactorily. According to Crystal (2001), one can arrive at the answer to such questions only by examining the language acquisition process in early childhood. He maintains:

“... And the answer is: from the very beginning. Language play is at the core of early parent-child interactions. Virtually as soon as a baby is born, it becomes part of a ludic linguistic world.” Crystal (2001: 159)

Cook (2000: 3) expresses surprise on the extent to which the younger generations have to toil in order to follow the rules that adult members of their community have made. He further doubts if the adult members enjoy watching the children toil. In the entire process, what remains out of focus is the awesome patterns that children generate with sounds and words when are into the playful states.

“Children could, when they have nothing to do, switch off like machines, or sleep, or use their free time and linguistic ability more profitably to learn about the real rather than fictional worlds. Yet their play, with or without languages, is just something which – like their language acquisition – we usually take for granted.” (Cook 2000: 3)

Humour is part of maturation process for all humans. Some of our funniest experiences are the ones that we encountered during childhood. It involves affective aspects because it represents not only funny, silly, innocent and ignorant aspects of life but also learning what is funny and why it is funny.

A problematic issue concerning children's humour is the situating the onset of humour in children. The issue is significant for the following universals:

- a) all humans experience some form of humour in their early years,
- b) laughter, which is the most significant indicator of humorous experience, in case of young children may not correspond to humorous experience,
- c) there are fewer studies on children’s humour and laughter,
- d) the onset of ability to interpret humorous utterances confirms the onset of skill to lie, pretend and role-play.
- e) the biophysical conditions constraints the experimental research on children
- f) the onset of humour comprehension indicates the onset of ability to handle ambiguities and incongruities.

While some researchers such as Pien & Rothbart (1980) claim that humour enters into the human life as early as 4½ months’ age. McGhee (1979) maintains that children start experiencing humour at the age of 18 months, whereas the laughter before that age may occur due to certain other biophysical factors. Hoicka (2007) investigated whether 18-36 month olds understand humour and humorous intentions. He observes that young children involve in copying jokes with incongruities and correcting physical mistakes. His experiments with toddlers also revealed that 25-30 and 31- to 36-month-olds copied ambiguous jokes and corrected ambiguous mistakes based on intentional cues alone. These findings are important from the language acquisition perspectives, for the skill to interpret utterances, containing incongruous structures is a life-long gain for an individual. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Children’s humour
i	Child A: We belong to the human species. Child B: And, what about our parents?
ii	Child A: Why a toothbrush is not named teethbrush since it cleans our teeth. Child B: Why the plural of human is not humen.
iii	Parent A: What does your son want to become when he grows? Parent B: A garbage collector. Parent A: That’s unusual, anything special about it? Parent B: Yeah, he thinks the garbage collector works only on Tuesdays.
iv	A child visited the hospital where she saw wires connected to the patients’ fingers in hand and feet. When the child’s friends asked what she saw at the hospital, she replied. I saw that people were being recharged.
v	In a drama the boy acting as Bal Gangadhar Tilak delivered the following dialogue: “Swaraj is my birth right and I shall take care of him.” When asked to why he said so he explained. Swaraj was his classmate and the teacher had asked all to take care of him.

Table 2.4: Children’s humour^{vi}

The use of verbal humour in interactions at home, at schools and at playgrounds deserves special attention because verbal humour can have impact on the psychological health and overall development of the children.

2.4.7. Verbal humour in computational context

The development of computational models for humorous interactions is a cumbersome task. However, it is necessary for the advancement of artificial intelligence (Hempelmann 2012: 14). It is also advantageous for an objective description of the phenomenon. Verbal humour posits a serious challenge to the researchers in the field of computational linguistics and natural language processing. A programme that intends to analyse a joke or throw humorous stimuli needs to switch between compatible and incompatible meanings and thereby work like the human mind. Therefore, verbal humour has proven to be a problematic substance for computational activity. The main reason behind this problematic nature of verbal humour is its context sensitivity. In case of verbal humour, there are two contexts; one is obvious and the other is elusive. However, researchers in the field of computational linguistics as well as artificial intelligence have been trying to develop programmes that recognise the humorous aspects of a specific text.

Computational humour has presented a strong challenge that scholars from computer science, artificial intelligence, psychology and linguistics have also acknowledged. However, unlike these scholars Stock (2002) presents the case of computational humour in a positive light. In addition, he also presents the methodological advantage in the form of falsifiability prospects of the end product. Stock (2002) also reports of HAHAcronym that would be the first European project focussing on computational humour. According to Taylor & Mazlak (2004) it is possible to create programmes that can recognise and generate jokes, however, there are difficulties involved in it. One of the challenges is to train the machines to analyse and understand jokes like human naturally do. Ritchie's (2001) *Current directions in Computational Humour* is an important contribution to this new field. According to Ritchie (2001: 1) humour is a genuine issue in the field of artificial intelligence. Furthermore, computational humour is encoding, implementation and evaluation of computer programmes that can produce humour and respond to it.

Concerning non-humorous and bona-fide interactions Hempelmann (2012: 15) argues that making specific sense of the underspecified would be useful in disambiguation tasks. However, humorous texts are based on overlapping and contradictory meanings. The development of computational humour including the comprehension and production of humour by machines would require programmes that can oscillate between the more obvious surface meaning and the less obvious intended meaning.

2.4.8. Verbal humour in pedagogical context

Humour in classrooms refers to such inadvertent situations that involve learning difficulties, miscues, faulty applications of concepts, misunderstanding etc. This kind of humour occurs in all kinds of learning. However, language classrooms offer a rich laboratory for the observation for pedagogical humour. Consider the following examples of English use that have originated in English language classrooms:

Sl. No.	Instances of funny errors by learners of English
i	Pick up the paper and fall in the dustbin
ii	This night was an extra ordinary day.
iii	Back to back, they faced each other.
iv	Both of you 3 stand together separately

v	Will you hang that calendar or else I hang myself
vi	Tomorrow call your parents especially your Mother and father
vii	Why are you looking at the monkey outside when I'm in the class
viii	I have two daughters both are girls
ix	Stand in the middle of the corner.
x	Give me a red pen of any colour

Table 2.5: Funny errors in language learning^{vii}

Concerning the pedagogical effects, verbal humour has attracted tremendous debates. On the one hand, the education givers hail its enabling effects. While on the other hand, they caution against its inhibitory effects. However, the majority of scholarship participating in this debate believes that the use of humour as a resource for educational objectives will have positive outcomes.

“... the main reason for using humorous examples in language teaching is that, by this means, a student may acquire a language as an integral part of a rich fabric of social practices rather than as a denuded and isolated skill.” Goldstein (1990: 48)

Goatly (2012) believes that humour can function as a mnemonic and pedagogical tool for (English) language educators. Therefore, Meaning and Humour uses jokes as a peg on which to hand theoretical concepts, but also aims to achieve more than that. Various research initiatives have confirmed the facilitative role humor plays in learning situations (Bruner 2002, Askildson 2005, Morrison 2008 Garner 2005). A typical feature of verbal humour like jokes and puns is that it involves language manipulation multiplies the contexts in unpredictable ways.

“Since jokes are fun and memorable, introduce the learner not just to a language but to a culture, and provide exercise in inferring (“thinking in a language”), they should be used extensively, provided the teacher is attuned to the different tolerance levels of different groups of learners.” Goldstein (1990: 48)

Humorous and playful use of rhyme, alliterations and assonance from the target language adds to an indirect acquisition and observance of phonological rules. Similarly, fun-filled activities involving oxymoron result in greater lexical and semantic awareness among the learners. Thus, humour can act as a tool for developing skills like phonological games, word-sense disambiguation, sentential logic and the like. The regular use of humour like creative language would ensure a greater level of meta-linguistic awareness.

According to Ziv (1988) there is a distressful shortage of teaching materials that are humorous. With the inclusion of humour the academic programmes would become highly effective and the learning would increase significantly if humour features in the course contents (Garner 2005). Therefore humour should be part of educational policy itself. The syllabus designing, material development, the teaching activities as well as evaluation need to create space for the creative blend of fun and learning. There is no singular way of incorporating humour into the language classrooms. The incorporation of humour in classrooms is more complex than it appears on the surface level (Martin 2007). According to Morrison (2008) it is difficult to define, difficult to practice and difficult to integrate humour into the school cultures. A lot of carefulness is required in planning as well as execution. Humorous activities can become the source, medium and goal of the (language) classrooms. Thereby, they can positively alter the limits of teachability and enhance the level of satisfaction among the pupils.

2.4.9. Verbal humour in the literary context

Punning: Punning (also known as paronomasia) is a humorous play on words. The word PUN is of Italian origin. It comes from *puntiglio* referring to ‘fine point’ and representing language use in which words carrying multiple senses occur. According to Ritchie (2004: 109), “one of the simplest forms of joke is the pun, often known as a play on words.” These words usually appear similar in spelling or sound but differ in meaning so much so that a humorous effect is created. Puns are perhaps most easily available forms of verbal humour. Concerning the widespread use and prevalence of puns Raskin (1985: 141) maintains that:

“It is the easy availability of puns which makes them a cheap and somewhat despicable type of humor for many individuals and social groups.”

Consider the following example:

Every decision we take as adults has its prose and cons.

Every decision that we take as adults has its pros and cons.

“The pun is a form of humor involving linguistic ambiguity. Ambiguity is, of course, a major means of constructing humorous speech acts, since a violation in one interpretation may be disguised by the straight interpretation of the other.” Veatch (1998: 200)

Pun forms a subset of verbal humour/joke that primarily depends on language. Attardo (1994: 102) reports that there is a prevalence of referential jokes over puns. It is often difficult to distinguish between the puns and the referential jokes. According to Attardo (1994: 28)

“if the text cannot be modified and still remains humorous, the humorous effect depends on the form [or linguistic sign] of the text.”

Sl. No.	Trigger	Target
i	Why is a group of friends called ‘friend circle’?	Because, a line has two ends, a triangle has three and a square has four ends. Only a circle has no ends.
ii	What is the best way to be in someone’s mind and heart?	Borrow some money
iii	raʋəŋ ki ləŋka ko sone ki ləŋka kjũ kəŋtə ɽʰe? (Why was Ravan’s Lanka called Lanka of gold)?	kumbʰkərən ki vədʒəh se (Because of Kumbhakaran) kjũki vəh həmeʃa soɽa rəŋtə ɽʰa (Because he used to sleep all the time).
iv	Secret formula for married couples: "Love One Another"	And, if it doesn't work, bring the last word in the middle!
v	At the beginning, every wife treats her husband as God.	Later, somehow the letters get reversed.

Table 2.6: Puns

Puns in the context of verbal humour are not merely literary devices. Since playful manipulation of language is integral to puns, they constitute an important sub-genre of verbal humour.

Malapropism: The term malapropism comes from Mrs. Malaprop, who was a character in the play titled *The Rival* by Richard Sheridan. Today malapropism represents deliberate or accidental misuse of words. In these instances of language, the users substitute the right words with similar sounding different words.

Spoonerism: The term spoonerism is coined after Dr. Spooner who was famous for replacing one part of an expression by another and vice-versa in a sentence. According to Baars (1992: 11), spoonerisms decompose words into phonemes or phoneme clusters. The following example has featured in most illustrations of spoonerism:

Spoonerism effect: You have *hissed* my *mystery* lectures.

Intended utterance: You have missed my history lectures.

Since spoonerism occurs in regular phonological patterns, it is possible to predict or create them by swapping the syllables of two words in juxtaposition or by swapping two phrases within a sentence. Consider the following example:

Spoonerism effect: He *dropped his trousers* and *found his watch*.

Intended speech: He found his trousers and dropped his watch.

Mondegreen: A mondegreen represents the aural counterpart of spoonerism and other slips of tongue phenomena. In such an instance, the interlocutor on the receiving end mishears or misinterprets the utterance. There is nothing wrong with the utterance but the hearer misperceives to the extent of humorous effect.

Joke: It is the act of saying or doing something that evokes laughter and the experience of funniness. According to Leacock (1971: 215),

“A joke is a sort of syllogism with a major proposition as its hypothesis. The rest of it, in one fashion or the other, can be reduced to a set of consequences running to an absurdity”.

Joking is unquestionably the most common form of verbal humour. It stands out as a universally present and highly frequent act of human-human interaction. It has emerged as major way by which humans communicate and establish rapport with their fellow beings. Most scholars have preferred to categorise jokes into two groups: canned jokes and conversational jokes. However, this distinction is not very strict.

“A rigid distinction between canned and conversational jokes cannot be maintained, however, since canned jokes may be recycled – that is, contextually adapted to the point that a canned joke may be presented in a manner indistinguishable from a spontaneous joke.” Attardo (2015: 172)

The canned jokes work like proverbs as they stay in people’s memory. The context of canned jokes is often available to the interlocutors as it depends on common knowledge. Conversational jokes are jokes that occur spontaneously or accidentally during conversation. They may lose their funniness outside the context of the conversation in which they have emerged. It is possible for a speaker to alter a canned joke and use it like a spontaneous joke and it is sometimes possible that a laughable conversational joke that emerged spontaneously becomes a canned joke due to wider currency. On the whole, the distinction between the two is superficial.

Irony: The term irony has its origin in the Greek word *eironeia* meaning dissembling, pretention or ignorance. In modern English, the term irony refers to saying something while meaning something completely opposite. Concerning humour, irony refers to witty use of language in which the speaker says one thing, but intends something humorously different. It largely depends on the mismatch between what the receiver expects and what the speaker ultimately utters. The purpose of irony is mostly to cause insult or scorn to the target person, group or policy. Consider the following example:

Cleanliness is next to impossible^{viii}

The use of irony in social interactions with humorous effects is an incredible phenomenon. The study of irony also has a long history involving participation of highly diverse scholarship. A common understanding that has emerged from the various studies of irony is that in irony the speaker says something and means something the opposite. Scholars have divided irony into verbal irony and situational irony and have accorded high value to the ‘context’ for deciphering meaning. There are several theories of irony, however, the ideas of Pretence Theory treats it similar verbal humour. Sperber and Wilson (1981) advanced the pretence theory of irony according to which the speaker pretends to be speaker and speaks to the audience, who is also ignorant.

Satire: Satire represents a style of language use in which the speaker says one thing, but means completely opposite of it. The satirical language usually target persons, groups, occasions, or policies that have a direct bearing on society. The purpose of a satire is usually to express dislike and scorn. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Satirical humour
i	A: Kerala is god’s own country. B: And, the Rest of India is made in China.
ii	Why do people say “love brings spice, happiness, tears and add flavour and taste to life”? Is it not that <i>pani puri</i> do the same job much better.
iii	Mike and Wife Difference. (Mike can be shut, you can speak in front of it, mike's height can be adjusted, mike can be exchanged, if it goes unwell it becomes quiet). <div style="text-align: right;">Albela Khatri^{ix}</div>

Table 2.7a: Satirical humour

In the above example the first instance satirises a very common expression used by the people of Kerala, the southern-most state of India. The frequent use of this expression gives a sense of pride to the people of Kerala. However, this kind of language use has also resulted in formations of in-groups. In this example, the satire is not only about the rest of Indians being different from Keralites but also that they are made in China. Made in China is an expression that evokes the feelings of products that are cheaply available in the markets across the Indian sub-continent.

The second instance satirises the extremely different emotions experienced by people who are in love by comparing love with *pani puri*, a street food that is common across Indian cities. *Pani puri* is an Indian recipe that is popular as evening snacks and starter for the meal. Its price is low and it is mostly available through street vendors. Most of the people who like this food item prefer it in hot and spicy flavour because of which tears roll out when they consume it.

Satires have an important role in society. They serve as the vehicle of socio-political ideas and conflicts. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Verbal humour in satirical forms
i	b ^h ale hi dzəmane ko d̪ik ^h ane ke lije (Okay, even if it is for showing to the world) pər həsla tʃahije məskorane ke lije (Courage is needed to smile) Waheguru Bhatia ^x
ii	ek neṭa kəhī k ^h o gəja hē (A leader is missing somewhere) kəhī aḍmi t̪o nəhī ho gəja hē? (Has he become a man?) sok ^h e ke d̪ore pər nikla t̪h̪a pərso (He had gone to assess the drought situations day before yesterday) kəhī pani pani t̪o nəhī ho gəja hē (Has he become ashamed?) Diljeet Singh Reel ^{xi}

Table 2.7b: Satirical humour

Parody: A parody is a humorous repetition of utterances/writings of somebody's style or composition. It shares a lot of similarities with satire and sarcasm.

Mockery: A mockery is an instance of language use that intends to show contempt. It can involve verbal utterance or manual gestures or both. As an utterance or composition, it depends largely on humorously misrepresenting somebody's style of speaking or writing.

Spoof: A Spoof refers to an utterance or composition that carefully and deceptively misrepresents somebody's style, writings or performance for humorous effects. It is a deliberate act, often highlighting the shortcomings in the target person, group or performance. After the onset of cyber platforms spoofs, in particular the political spoofs have emerged as an important genre. *The Onion* is an important example in the United States of America, whereas *The Faking News* and *The Unreal Times* are excessively popular in India.

Riddles: A riddle (also known as brainteaser) is an enigmatic use of language. It typically throws a problem the answer of which appears excessively difficult to the extent that the person who is the target surrenders. Sometimes the problem appears quite simplistic but the actual answer is surprisingly different from what one can guess.

Double entendre: As the term suggests, a double entendre is an utterance or composition that is highly ambiguous. In these instances of language use, if one of the possible meanings is polite and delicate, the other is indelicate. These instances of language use are deliberate. The speaker uses the first interpretation, the literal one, as a mask and indirectly uses the second one to hint at something that would be indecent to be used in the public. The judgement on the degree of delicacy, politeness and decency in these phenomena depends on speech community and varies across cultures. Frequent halts or delay in the information relay is an important strategy in the use of double entendre. Another term used for this phenomenon is innuendo.

Hyperbole: Hyperbole is a form of exaggeration. In case of hyperbole, the humorous effect arises due to unachievable and unimaginable exaggerations in language that speakers adopt to heighten the emphasis of the language used in the context. Like hyperbole, overstatements also exaggerate in order to heighten the emphasis and intensify the effect of speech act. In contrast, understatement tries to downplay or reduce the intensity for humorous impact.

False start: A false start is an instance of humour where the speaker begins with a word or an expression but stops shortly and restarts with a modified version. The listeners

experience funniness because they swing between the first (humorous) expression and the second (literal) expression. They experience enjoyment because they first allow the speaker to mislead them and then to correct themselves. False start is an important narrative strategy in stand-up comedy, compering acts and informal announcements. In false starts, the listeners are often able to notice that there was something unusual in the utterance but permit the speaker to continue believing that it could be a slip of tongue.

Bathos: The term bathos refers to a sudden shift from a serious issue to a disappointing one. It is comparable to mawkishness. From the rhetorical perspective, bathos is a humour generating device.

The set of literary texts that contain various kinds of verbal humour usually do not fit into the category of literary styles because they are difficult to define and quantify. Experientially they remain intangible and generically they stand at the crossroads of various sub-genres.

2.4.10. Verbal humour in philosophical and aesthetic contexts

Verbal humour has always remained an important substance for research philosophy and aesthetics. It is able to occupy an eminent place in these disciplines because verbal humour is about meaning construction and beauty in the language manipulation. Perhaps these are also the core concerns of philosophy and aesthetics. The use of humour always posits an ethical dilemma concerning the appropriateness of humour, its type, its context, the narrative technique, and so on. Understandably, the philosophers were among the first to pursue humour from a scientific standpoint.

“Today, many philosophers are more concerned with conceptual analysis than causal explanation. In studying laughter, amusement and humor, they try to make clear the concepts of each, asking, for example, what has to be true of something in order for it to count as amusing.” Morreall (2009: 7)

Even though the earliest treatises on humour evolved in the study and description of theatre, the aesthetic context of humour has not received enough attention in the research literature (Khan 2010). Humour and aesthetic have a lot in common and initiatives aimed at discovering the aesthetic contexts of humour would be highly beneficial.

“Humour and aesthetic experience are also similar in their emphasis on imagination and surprise. In both, we often see things from unusual perspectives, find unexpected similarities, and think creatively. Both artists and humourists are commonly praised for their cleverness and for the novelty of the fantasies they create.” Morreall (2009: 71)

McGhee (1979: 6) offers an interesting perspective concerning humour.

“Humour (like beauty) is something that exists only in our minds and not in the real world. Humour is not a characteristic of certain events (such as cartoons, jokes, clowning behaviour, etc.) although certain stimulus events are more likely than others to produce the perception of humour.”

From the spiritual perspectives, humour exists to remind the humanity that there is lighter side every problem. Humorous instantiations not only throw puzzles and confusing situations but they also show ways to experience pleasure and enjoyment. They train us to observe asymmetries and absurdities with pleasure and use them to develop endurance for life's challenges. The diverse instances of humour compel us to look at a phenomenon

from a new perspective.

2.4.11. Verbal humour in visual and semiotic context

The visual and semiotic contexts of verbal humour concern such phenomena that present a harmonious blend of image and text. The funniness in such phenomena arises because both the forms participate without overlapping each other. The verbal humour, in this kind of blended forms, serves as an easy means to convey an otherwise difficult idea/ideology. In addition, this category of humour exploits visual metaphors and metonymy. Comic strips, graffiti and cartoons are good examples of verbal humour in semiotic context. Consider the following examples:



Table 2.8: Verbal humour in visual and semiotic contexts^{xii}

These instances of humour may also get a new name. The present research prefers the term visual-verbal humour for this variety. The justification for the hyphenated nomenclature is that in these instances of humour both image as well as the text contribute to the humorous effect. Both are complementary.

2.4.12. Verbal humour in historical context

The nature and means of has kept changing over time. It is possible that the kind of humour that was funny and pleasurable a couple of centuries ago would fail to cause amusement today. A logical explanation for this is that every instance of humour has its context and style within which it evokes maximum laughter. However, with time, the context may immaterial or the style may become out of favour. Alternatively, there is no surprise element or incongruity left in it. Morreall (2009) claims that the present-day humour has become more sophisticated than the earlier ones. However, he does not

undermine the common thread in the humour of the past and the present. Morreall (2009: 51) states:

“Despite our sophistication, however, our humor has much in common with prehistoric humor. The basic pattern is that:

- a) We experience a cognitive shift – a rapid change in our perceptions or thoughts.
- b) We are in a play mode rather than a serious mode, disengaged from conceptual and practical concerns.
- c) Instead of responding to the cognitive shift with shock, confusion, puzzlement, fear, anger, or other negative emotions, we enjoy it.
- d) Our pleasure at the cognitive shift is expressed in laughter, which signals to others that they can relax and play too.”

2.4.13. Verbal humour in the organisational context

Workplace humour is an important sub-class and it has two dimensions. The first dimension relates to successful communication, while the second dimension relates to overall environment of the workplace and employees motivation (Holmes 2002 & 2006). This class mostly contains jokes and para jokes. In organisational settings communications skills play an important role. Therefore, the team leaders as well as employees are always on lookout for recyclable humour. Sometimes when there is pressure situation due to excessive workload or time constraint use of humorous utterances contributes to the laughter for all. Workplace humour deserves attention of the scholars also because it can be facilitative as well as inhibitory for the persons in concern (Holmes 2006).

“The subversive potential of humor has long been recognized: an examination of the history of comedy and humor reveals this recognition as exemplified most forcefully through the persistent attempt to contain humor within the structures and institutions of the dominant orthodoxy.”
Westwood & Johnston (2013: 226)

In an organisational set-up it is of paramount significance that the communication chains between the employer & the employee and among the employees do not break. Humour in organisational set-up can both enhance and interrupt the communication between and among the employees. The modern day organisations have started realising the significance of humour in enhancing the workplace environment. Therefore, they have started creating avenues for creative relay and exchange of humour in the workplace.

2.4.14. Verbal humour in the context of translation

Humour translation is primarily a linguistic and cognitive exercise. It involves export of a special kind of message that significantly differs from scientific texts into the target language. The translation activity has the additional task of preserving the form, the content, the context and the impact of source text. Translation of verbal humour is important because it establishes new tangents of interactions between languages and cultures that have remained quite distant and aloof. The translation of verbal humour is an intimidating challenge, as it requires not only knowledge about two languages but also cultural equivalents in them. Under this criterion, it is nearly impossible to translate verbal jokes from one language to another. According to Koestler (1989: 31),

“Humour is the only domain of creative activity where a stimulus on a high level of complexity produces a massive and sharply defined response on the level of physiological reflexes.”

A number of Translation Studies scholars, for instance Bassnett (1986), have maintained that verbal humour such as jokes are not translatable. It is not common for the matching word forms to have all senses identical in two different languages. Chiaro (2005 & 2008) considers the translation of humour a delicate task and notes that the quality of translation can significantly affect the quality of humour. A translation that leaves the piece of humour bereft of amusement and funniness is an act of betrayal Low (2010). An important aspect of Low’s paper is that it explains how translators can handle the problems that arise in the translation of jokes. Furthermore, it offers eight implementable strategies for translating jokes. Davies (2005 & 2008) highlights the intricacies involved in the translation of ethnic humour. Understandably, there is very little scholarship on the translation of verbal humour whereas the ones that are available mostly focus on conversational jokes. The absence of scholarship on humour translation may be due to the risk in locating equivalents. However, the task of humour translation is not as hopeless as the earlier scholars in translation used to assume. Barring a few genres such as punning riddles and tongue twisters, most of them are translatable. Humour is a common recipe on most platforms of mass communication, be it newspaper, radio, television, cell phone or internet.

Yakin (1999) studies the issues related to the strategies of humour translation. It focuses on cartoons and speech bubbles appearing in *Leman*, a humour weekly that is published from Turkey. This work merits a discussion not only because it is first of its kind on the translation of cartoons. Rather, it is significant because it expressed faith on the possibility of translation of humour and demonstrated that within a sub-filed of humour. Concerning the comparison of the joke in source text and the joke in the target text, Yus (2012) suggests three scenarios; cultural, semantic and pragmatic. Concerning the translatability, Yus (2012) illustrates the following three possible classes; the transferable jokes, the replaceable jokes and the challenging ones.

The studies on translation of comic strips and cartoons present a more abysmal picture than the translation of other forms such as jokes. Arguably, there is a lot of humour translation taking place on a frequent basis. It requires no special research to understand that creative programmes such as sitcoms and stand-up comedies, SMS jokes, politoons, online parody, etc. have become popular around the globe. On most counts they begin at one place as a creative initiative and spread to various continents through TV channels and cyber world. Unless it contradicts the traditional beliefs of a community, newer instances of verbal humour are able to make headways everywhere. The sudden escalation on the presence of humour on television channels, mobile phones and internet has become possible for two reasons; first, they operate through visual mediums and second humour has started to cross geo-political and cultural boundaries through translation.

2.5. A comparison of research publications on humour

This section compares the topics and areas that have received attention in various forms of publication. This comparative analysis includes three kinds of publication; (a) Dissertations and theses, (b) Research articles and (c) Books published. For the purpose,

the researcher assembled the academic foci of the above list and classified them into the following:

Sr.	Focus		
A	Education and Pedagogy	E	Sociology and Politics
B	Language and Linguistics	F	Philosophy and Religion
C	Anthropology and Culture	G	Laughter and Health
D	Psychology and Cognition	H	Literature and Theatre

Table 2.9: Humour in academic publications

The classification is primarily for the convenience of sorting and it does not cover all the publications in Humour. Some articles did not fit into any of the above classes. Consequently, they did not form part of the analysis. The publications on Health include mental and physical health as well as relationships.

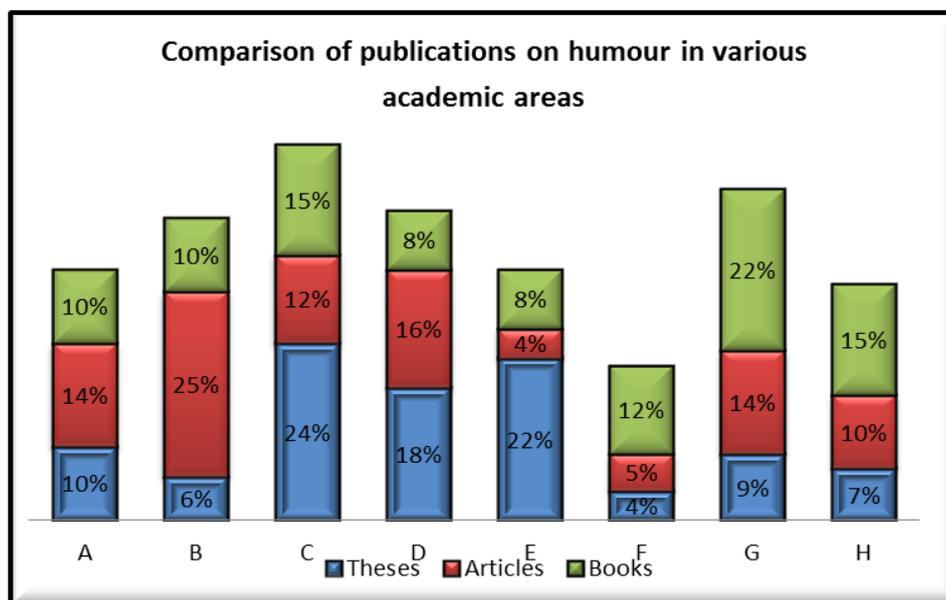


Illustration 2.2: Comparison of scholarship on humour

The above data reflects that Linguistics has received significant representation in the publication of scientific articles but not in thesis and books. The high score of Linguistics concerning the research articles may also be due to the regular publication of the journal *HUMOR: The International Journal of Humor Research*. As a matter of fact, most scientific articles relevant to Linguistics-Humour interface have appeared in this journal which is in publication since 1988.

2.6. Classifications

A number of classifications of humour that are already available point to the fact that the classification of humour reflects a tremendous influence of the theory working in the background. If a particular classification focusses on the social aspects, it will classify the humour as ethnic humour, workplace humour, and religious humour and so on. However, the classification focusses on language and cognition; it will classify the humour as humour involving ambiguities, humour involving forced reinterpretation, and so on. One

possible classification is based on typography. This classification will offer humour sub-types such as humour involving misspelling, knock-knock jokes, stupid one-liners, and so on. Some scholars have attempted to designate the use of the humour for certain specific phenomena.

“There is nothing more basic than categorization to our thought, perception, action, and speech. Every time we see something as a kind of thing, for example, a tree, we are categorizing.” (Lakoff 1987: 5)

The contemporary use of the term ‘humour’ includes a range of phenomena such as comic situation, ability to use and perceive incongruous interactions, playfulness, joking acts, pranks, so on and so forth. Today it serves as a cover term for various phenomena that involve funniness and laugh.

2.6.1. Classification of verbal humour

If an instance of verbal humour is able to cause the experience of funniness among the interlocutors, it is due to a number of factors. This is to say that humour succeeds not because of a single factor but because of the cooperation of a number of factors such as the language use, situation, context, background knowledge, genre, narrative techniques of the presenter, preparedness of the participants and so on and so forth.

If the above is true, why should a thesis explore the reasons for laughter in humorous interactions? The reason is quite simple to understand. Among the list of factors responsible for causing the experience of funniness in an instance of humorous interaction, a particular factor is more salient than the others are. The researchers treat it as the representative of all factors. The knowledge of this salient factor, the representative factor, helps in developing a convenient classification of humour. It also helps the interlocutors in storing the humour in mind and recalling it or reusing it. This study tries to pick such representative factors in a corpus of jokes. Such representative factors would determine an organic classification of verbal humour.

A scientific classification of verbal humour should reflect a conceptual basis and sort the corpora into mutually exclusive, exhaustive and identifiable categories. Such a classification should also mark the orbits of sub-categories and state conditions for their overlap. Classification of verbal humour has its significance in the fact that it can guide the entire research activities in this enterprise.

This section narrows down its focus and treats verbal humour as identical with jokes. It concentrates on two kinds of classification of jokes: linguistic and conceptual. It is important to understand the difference between the two. Here the linguistic classification refers to the use/manipulation of various aspects of language, say sounds, words, sentences, etc. to achieve humorous effects. Whereas, the conceptual classification refers to cognitive strategies such as satire, irony, delay, subversion, exaggeration, counterfactual thinking, fantasy, etc.

Monro (1951: 40) offers the following classification:

“(a) Any breach of the usual order of events, (b) Any forbidden breach of the usual order of events, (c) Indecency, (d) Importing into one situation what belongs to another, (e) Anything masquerading as something it is not, (f) Word-play, (g) Nonsense, (h) Small misfortunes, (i) Want of knowledge or skill, (j) Veiled insults.”

Dynel (2009: 1284) classifies verbal humour into two groups; jokes and conversational humour. However, Dynel presents yet another classification in 2012. Dynel's (2012) classification of jokes originates from incongruity resolution theory. This classification includes the following patterns:

“(a) garden-path patterns; jokes in which the hearer needs to cancel the initial prediction once the punchline arrives. (b) red-light pattern; jokes in which the cancellation of initial prediction is not necessary but the end surprises the hearer. (c) Crossroads patterns; jokes in which multiple incongruities can occur.”

A careful analysis would reveal that the above classification is problematic, for (a) and (b) or (b) and (c) can combine to reduce the number of categories. Again, (d) and (e) can refer to the instances of humour similar to lying / pretending. Disagreeing with the above classification, Raskin (1985: 30) terms it suffering from imprecision and non-homogeneity. A question relevant to the classification of humour is as following: Are these classes and sub-classes instances of humour? Alternatively, is it mere coincidence that humour happens to be a common ingredient in all of the?

Carell's view about the defining characteristics of jokes is in sharp contrast with the prevalent theories of humour. She has accorded high values to the audience if a joke were to qualify as humorous. While most humour theories have maintained that a verbal humour is a text that is humorous, Carell finds the 'situation' and 'audience' as the determining factors. The humorous stimuli necessitate some sort of especial comprehension skills for the interlocutors oscillate between the linguistic forms and their contexts. This kind of comprehension process is called inferencing. Carell (1993) notes that researchers working on the physiological effects of humour have documented the changes in pupil diameter, skin conductance and heart rate of the subjects when they experienced humorous stimuli.

A number of classifications of humour that is already available point to the fact that the classification of humour reflects a tremendous influence of the theory working in the background. If a particular classification scheme focusses on the social aspects, it classifies the humour as ethnic humour, workplace humour, and religious humour and so on. However, if the classification scheme focusses on language and cognition; it classifies the humour as humour involving ambiguities, humour involving forced reinterpretation, and so on. One possible classification is based typography. This classification would offer humour sub-types such as humour involving misspelling, knock-knock jokes, stupid one-liners, and so on.

2.6.2. Classifications of humour theories

There is plenty of research literature dealing with the theories of verbal humour. Most of them have focussed on the socio-psychological divide in the origin of these theories. The credit for the first linguistic theory of humour goes to Raskin's (1985) Script-Based Semantic Theory of Humor (SSTH). Though this theory saw revisions by Raskin and his followers, it remains one of the most significant reference points for humour researchers. Attardo's (1991 & 1994) *Linguistic Theory of Verbal Humour* is an exception to the norm. In the early years of the 21st century several scholars have attempted to offer classifications of humour (Khan 2010). The next chapter examines the issues and debates related to theoretical aspects of verbal humour in detail.

2.6.3. In defence of the plural account of humour experience

No single factor can fully explain the complex and multifarious nature of humour. Most accounts of humour have focussed on either funniness as the defining criterion of humour or incongruity as the reason for funniness. Given this, what can be the reason for failed humour? There is incongruity, but no humour. Again, what about humour in which there is more than one incongruity? Will such instances of humour prove to be funnier than other instances of humour? In addition, what could be reason for the experience of funniness in humour that does not have incongruity? These questions point to the fact that a single factor cannot account for all kinds of humour. A robust account will have to depend on multiple sources of explanation. Therefore, besides incongruity the cultural context also plays a significant role.

2.7. The humour landscapes in India

Humour has always been an integral part of the Indian lifestyle and culture. The early treatise on theatrical humour during the ancient times, oral traditions in courtrooms during the medieval times, stand-up comedy during the era of televised humour, spoofs and politoons during the era of cyber communications not only embody irresistible fun prevalent in India. Rather, they manifest India's serious and continuous engagement with humour in terms of both theorising as well as performance. This section presents a bird's view on the humour landscape of India.

2.7.1. Humour in early India

Theoretically, the earliest account of humour in India comes from *Naatyashastra*, a treatise on drama by Bharata Muni. In this detailed account of drama, Bharata has discussed *haasya* (comparable to laughter) as an element within drama. Etymologically the word *haasya* comes from Sanskrit and refers to laughter. *Natyashastra* offers a detailed theory of drama and explains its intricacies through nine *rasas* (cf. mood), *haasya* being one among them. According to this treatise, *haasya* (laughter) emerges from factors such as mimicry, foolish activities, speech errors, incoherent speech etc. In addition, this treatise explicates six distinct varieties of laughter that correspond to various personality types. There are two aspects of *haasya rasa*; one targets self and the other targets others. However, it is important to note that *haasya rasa* is not only one among the *rasas* but an integral part of the treatise itself.

2.7.2. Humour in medieval India

There were no theoretical developments on humour during the medieval times in India. However, real and imaginary stories exhibiting excellent witticism of court jesters who not only amused the rulers but also gave them useful advices became popular during the medieval times. In fact, jesters and comic persons who displayed quick wits received royal titles and found special place in some courts. Their performances displaying humour and moral of the medieval times remained intact through oral transmission and are available as cartoons, theatrical plays, films and children's literature even today. Some names became so integral to Indian oral and folk tales that all school syllabi tend to

include them in literature textbooks. For instance, the following names deserve a special mention in any historical account of Indian humour traditions:

- a) Gonu Jha existed in during the 13th century AD. He belonged to the court of Raja Hari Singh of Mithila. He received the title of ‘Pratyutpannamati’ meaning ready-witted.
- b) Birbal, whose actual name was Mahesh Das Bhatt, lived in the 16th century AD and belonged to the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar.
- c) Tenali Rama’s actual name was Tenali Ramakrishna. He lived in the 16th century AD and belonged to the court of Raja Krishnadeva Rai of Vijayanagar Kingdom,
- d) Gopal Bhar or Gopal Bhand lived during the 18th century AD and belonged to court of Raja Krishnachandra of Nadiya in Bengal.
- e) Dal Bahadur Gurung existed in the 20th century AD and was popular in the North-East India and Nepal.

All the above names are real human beings in Indian history. However, the comic tales that depict them are partially imaginary. Their wits and humour are so popular that their names have become metaphors for people with high intelligence and presence of mind. In addition, several imaginary characters of similar traits have also existed in the history of humour in India. For instance, *Sheikh Chilli*, *Mullah do Pyaza* and *Mullah Nasiruddin* have been popular for more than four centuries now. They mostly represent mischievous characters that try to inject lessons of good moral and conduct through humour. Contrastively, Santa and Banta form an ever-growing humour combo that depicts Panjabi people and culture. The Santa-Banta jokes deserve a mention here because these jokes originate within and outside Panjab, a state in the North-West India. Arguably, they provide evidence for the fact that Panjabis construct jokes on themselves and exhibit tolerance for jokes directed at them. Though the above real and fictitious characters belong to diverse languages, cultures and kingdoms, there are structural similarities in the humorous tales associated with them. May be these similarities hint at some universal aspects of humour. The quantity and quality of humour in their oral narratives have sustained through changing times and match with the comic literature of the European countries. They are excessively amusing exhibiting a perfect recipe for verbal humour, language pedagogy and comparative cultural studies.

The humorous tales associated with court jesters of the medieval times reflect upon the moral aspirations of the medieval times. They had interesting story lines that typically begins with a conflict or problematic situation. In the middle, the involvement of rulers or courtiers would heighten the anxiety of the listener. Finally, natural justice prevails through the witty arguments and actions initiated by the humourist. Until the broadcast of punchline, no one except the humourist has any clue to solve the problem. However, there are two problems with such tales; all of them are larger than typical joking texts and all of them are canned jokes. Since they are culture specific, these instances of humorous tales do not exhibit as much language manipulation as puns and jokes would exhibit.

2.7.3. Humour in contemporary India

A notable form of humour in the 20th century India is the rise and continuation of political cartoons in newspapers. The cartoons made by R. K. Laxman have remained popular across India and inspired many to continue the tradition. During the decades of 1970s,

1980s and 1990s, the characters like *Chacha Chaudhary* and *Sabu* became popular through children’s comics. Around the same time, TV programmes like *Tom & Jerry*, *Ducktales* and the like became household names. Comedy shows *Shriman Shrimati* (1995), *Tarak Mehta Ka Ulta Chashma* (2000) and *Dekh Bhai Dekh* (1993). The comedy serial *Zuban Sambhal Ke* (1993) corresponds to the English comedy *Mind Your Language*. At the same time, humorous advertisements that existed in print forms started appearing as short videos. During the final two-three decades of the 20th century, the Indian cinema treated the inclusion of a comedian as the recipe for a successful movie. The first decade of the 21st century saw the rise of stand-up comedy and humour competitions on Indian TV channels. Programmes such as Indian *Laughter Challenge*, *Comedy Circus* and *Comedy Nights* acquired prominence and ran successfully for years. It appeared as if jokes in verbal and written forms would become extinct. During this decade, it appeared that stand-up comedies on TV channels would replace the written and oral forms of jokes. However, the arrival of the virtual media coupled with the computer, mobile and Internet revolution proved to be its lifesaver. Now, the difference was only with respect to the platforms of relay. While, earlier it was mostly physical now it has become mostly virtual, but verbal humour continues to be an important and natural ingredient of human interactions. This decade also saw the growth of verbal humour in the form of text messages and emails. The virtual platform permitted easy access, quick relay and customization of humour contents.

An important development that began towards the late medieval and early modern period was the special (humorous) poetry recitals. Such performances became popular as *haasya kavi sammelan* literally meaning ‘humour poets’ meet’. Satirising the socio-political developments of recent times these events are popular even in the 21st century AD. The spread of Internet and computer mediated communication triggered a new wave of spoofs and comedy around the globe. The Indian response to this development came in the form of *The Faking News* and *The Unreal Times*, two web-portals that are Indian counterparts of *The Onion* and *The Faux* in the United States. When the integration of text, image, sound, and graphics became easily realizable on the Internet, animation programmes like *So Sorry*, *Dhol Ki Pol*, *All India Bakchod* (AIB), *The Viral Fever* (TVF), etc. became extremely. The episodes of these programmes are able to attract huge number of viewers. Sometimes the number of views crosses the million marks in less than a week of the launch.

Arguably, the nature of humour prevalent in India is true manifestation of India’s diverse culture and linguistic pluralism. An interesting and noteworthy point about humorous jokes prevalent in India is the presence and frequent code mixing of languages. Since code mixing has existed as a normative practice in interactions here, code mixing in conversational jokes is not a surprise. From language processing perspectives, people involving in code-mixed humorous interactions easily exploit and interpret the intricacies of their languages to create code-mixed humour. Concerning code mixing in humorous interactions chapter four and chapter five will present more information on the linguistic and cognitive aspects respectively. Consider a hilarious love letter by an Indian biscuit seller:

<p>Dear Marie Gold,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Today is not a Good Day. By doing Chaska Maska (flattery) with ParleG you have 50-50 Krack Jacked my Little Heart. Please stop Hide and Seek.</p> <p>Yours Tiger.</p>
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Table 2.10: A hilarious love letter^{xiii}

In sum, India's engagement with humour has been old and outstanding. With respect to theory building, theatrical performances, oral traditions, written literature and the new age media, India's humour landscape has stayed on par with humour traditions around the world. It has kept adopting new platforms and technologies and kept evolving through the latest humour style in the world.

2.8. The linguistic approaches to verbal humour

Verbal humour or verbally expressed humour attains its most salient characteristics i.e., funniness through manipulations in spoken or written language. These manipulations include playful sequencing of orthography, sounds, words or sentences. A common factor among them is the construction of linguistic expressions that are ambiguous and exhibit duality of meaning. Concerning the linguistic aspects of verbal humour, *Understanding Language through Humor* (2011) by Stanley Dubinsky and Chris Holcomb offers a hilarious introduction to various identifiable modules of human language as studied in Linguistics. It has exploited the richness of humour as trope to explicate the richness of linguistics and its various sub-fields. This work also demonstrates how the course instructors can make the learning of Linguistics exciting and fun-filled by presenting perceivably all sub-fields of Linguistics with ample and judicious use of verbal humour. With plenty of ready to use examples for complementing discussions on perceivably all sub-components of language this work is a treasure trove for serious research on the linguistic mechanisms of verbal humour. Through a fine mix of learning and laughter Dubinsky & Holcomb (2011) have explicated how humour can arise due to the asymmetry between grapheme and phonemes i.e., between letters and sounds, incompatibilities between forms and meaning of word, incongruities between intention and utterances, language plays such as 'word pastimes' spoonerism, malapropism and mondegreen and new coining such as *Bushism* and *Colbertism*. Following Raskin's (1985) *Semantic Mechanisms of Verbal Humor*, Attardo (1994) is one of the most distinguished scholars on the Humour Studies and Linguistics interface. He examines a host of humour theories representing various literary, philosophical and aesthetic traditions of Europe and America. One of its shortcomings is that it does not reflect upon the *haasya rasa* that belongs to the Indian humour tradition.

2.8.1. Explanations for humour

Explanation of the structure and architecture of verbal humour is an important aspect of the Linguistic approach to verbal humour. Concerning the explanation for humour in spoken or written texts, most theorists admit the presence of ambiguity. This ambiguity manifests in multiple scripts/interpretations some of which are highly incongruent with each other. Therefore, incongruity emerges as the natural cause behind humour in all theories, irrespective of the tradition they conform to.

“Is humour a real existing feature of the environment or is it a construction of the human mind? Unlike color, weight, or length, humor is not an inherent and intrinsic feature of certain stimuli in the environment. As a consequence, there is no objective measure of humor.” Mayerhofer (2014: 4)

Admitting that analysis of humour has remained outside the mainstream research in Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Simpson & Mayr (2010: 25) express surprise over the way humour has stayed outside its ambit.

“... it has been a marked failing of CDA that it has not recognized the importance of humour as a form of linguistic, social and cultural praxis.”

The CDA of verbal humour is full of promises because some forms of verbal humour have high currency in the workplace interactions. In addition, the humour in offices, schools, public spaces and larger gatherings of diverse kind witness changes in the form of verbal humour. Since the interactions taking place at these avenues regularly feature in CDA, the inclusion and focus on verbal humour would enrich the understanding of discourse as well as changes in humorous speech acts.

2.8.2. The issue of meaning in humorous texts

The issue of meaning has attracted considerable debate in Linguistics and Philosophy. The decades of 1950s, 1960s and 1970s that saw the dominance of generative and formalist approaches to the study of language did not give ample attention to the study of meaning. They considered language as rule-governed not as norm governed. Therefore, their focus stayed on extracting out rules and their formal descriptions. However, during the same time scholars in Pragmatics and Discourse held faith in meaning-based approach. These scholars questioned the neglect meaning received from the mainstream Linguistics and advanced this concern by employing the ideas of Gricean maxims and cooperative principle for the interpretation of meaning in usual conversations. According to Geeraerts (2006) the linguistic meaning has the following properties

- a) Linguistic meaning is perspectival. This means that meaning comes from the perspective. It may vary from persons to person and from culture to culture.
- b) Linguistic meaning is dynamic and flexible. This means the meaning is not rigid, not frozen. It changes with change in interactions with people and evolves along the experiences with natural environment.
- c) Linguistic meaning is encyclopaedic and non-autonomous
- d) Linguistic meaning is based on usage and experience

Transcending from the above dichotomy in approaches, meaning for a considerable section of the research community in Linguistics and elsewhere happens to be a phenomenon existing in dictionary. For all such scholars there is one to one mapping between the utterance and its meaning. In addition, idiomatic and phrasal expressions are instances of deviation from norms or exceptions. Whereas, the sociolinguists have mostly maintained that meaning lies in the interactions, not just in utterances. However, what makes the meaning related claims of these scholars difficult to accept is the fact that meaning is not static. Rather, it is dynamic, keeps changing. Meaning construction as a phenomenon of human mind is new perspective on meaning that emerged with the advancements in Cognitive Psycholinguistics. Accordingly, meaning of an utterance involves a construal mechanism, a unique encoding by the speaker(s) and decoding by the listener(s). Construal in this paradigm is a mental process that refers to analysis and conceptualization of utterances according to the context. This process of dynamic meaning construction is able to explain the figurative language use, including idiomatic, metaphorical and metonymic constructions, in day-to-day interactions.

Drawing from this it is plausible that humour construction and comprehension depends largely on the construal mechanism. Humorous interactions are instances where meanings compete and overlap with each other while the interlocutors construct them and manipulate with them. Concerning humorous interactions Brône & Feyaerts (2003: 1) discuss the following construal strategies:

“(a) Profiling of non-salient reference points. (b) Suppression of salient reference point. (c) Compression of two conceptual entities into a single reference point, and (d) Distortion of the prototype causal logic”

Brône and Feyaerts (2003) concentrate on humorous texts and graphics involving incongruity resolution and explain the above construal strategies as marked reference-point structures. The search for the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour gains considerable insights from the ideas that marked reference points are available in the structure of the utterance and construal strategies aid the dynamic meaning construction. The success with the identification of marked reference points and construal strategies appears inevitable for comprehension of verbal humour.

Though meaning is the ultimate criterion for evaluating the funniness of an expression, the term verbal humour fits such words/expressions whose meaning relies on their form as well as meaning. Meaning is the most important aspect of language in use. However, in Linguistics the study of meaning does not occupy as important position as the formal descriptions of language. Verbal humour is a distinctive feature of human language as it shows duality of meaning patterns. Concerning meaning, it is important to note that verbal humour by definition involves two (incompatible) meanings for a single utterance. Obviously, verbal humour falls outside the radar of formal and reflective Linguistics.

Meaning and Humour by Andrew Goatly is about meaning at different levels, viz. conceptual, inter-personal, social, semiotic, cultural, and so on. Its usefulness to humour researchers and linguists is beyond question. This work offers a diverse interpretation of meaning by substantiating it through jokes of various kinds. It embodies hundreds of jokes to illustrate how meanings and inferences depend not only on the linguistic expressions but also on the contexts. Analysing meaning in the language system, it presents humour emanating from creative manipulations at the various components of language.

Humorous texts are usually challenging from the point of view of comprehension. Goatly (2012: 2) considers jokes as ‘authentic texts’ and advocates the use of jokes in the study of meaning. Reading or listening to humorous texts presents a sort of challenge because there is kind of imbalance between the surface meaning and the intended meaning. Traditionally humour scholars have identified the following factors that can affect the difficulty level in a humorous text: the manner of humour relay on part of the teller and the interpreter’s familiarity with the domain and context. However, a new perspective concerning the difficulty level of humorous texts can emerge by taking into consideration how many construal strategies the text requires for a successful interpretation.

Goatly (2012) analyses the humorous expressions used in formal teaching and the real life experiences. He discusses the limitations of ideational, inter-personal and social interpretation of meaning and advances the Relevance Theory (RT) as propounded by Wilson and Sperber in 1986. He relates RT to deductive logic, humour interpretation and Gricean maxims and presents it in terms of a fraction where relevance is equal to contextual effects upon the processing effort. Goatly subtly links Grice’s cooperative

principle and impoliteness to humour theory. Along with, collocation, thematic meaning and cohesion, this work discusses how the genre of speech utterance/text may affect the meaning and explicates how humour may emanate from the given text types. It also presents a critique of the traditional de-contextualized/un-contextual semantics and meaning change.

2.9. The cognitive approaches to humour

Critical thinking in humour involves irrational thinking, faulty assumptions and inappropriate inferences. The term ‘critical thinking’ refers to the ability to apply reason and think logically. It is a desirable attribute and its presence among humans varies considerably. A person with critical thinking will be able to identify similarities and differences among the objects and events quite easily and s/he can express the same in amusing but socially acceptable ways. Accordingly, critical thinking as a personality disposition it enables individuals to identify what things should be like. Besides, it enables the individuals to communicate the contradictions, the inconsistencies and the missing links in diverse ways. Critical thinking is an essential prerequisite to enjoy humour in socially acceptable ways. With respect to humour, critical thinking is associated with humour production as well as humour comprehension. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Instances of joke
i	Two guys are walking down the street when a mugger approaches them and demands their money. They both grudgingly pull out their wallets and begin taking out their cash. Just then, one guy turns to the other and hands him a bill. “Here’s that \$20 I owe you,” he says.
ii	A guy was hired to paint the line down the centre of the road. The first day he managed to paint two miles, and his boss was very pleased. The next day he painted only 200 yards, but his boss thought he’d probably worked too hard the first day and needed to take it easier the second day. But on the third day he was only able to paint twenty feet. The boss called him into the office and demanded an explanation. The guy replied, “Well you see it’s getting so darned far to walk all the way back to the paint basket.”
iii	Bob received a parrot for his birthday. The parrot was fully grown, with a bad attitude and worse vocabulary. Every other word was an expletive, and the parrot was constantly cursing and swearing. Bob tried to change the bird’s attitude by setting a good example, but the bird continued to swear as much as ever. This went on for several months until finally, in a moment of desperation, Bob put the parrot in the freezer. For a few minutes he heard the bird squawking and cursing – and then suddenly it went quiet. Bob was afraid he had actually harmed the parrot and he quickly opened the freezer door. The parrot stepped out onto Bob’s extended arm and said, “I am sorry I have offended you with my language and actions and I

	ask for your forgiveness. I will endeavour to correct my behaviour.” Bob was astonished at the bird’s change when the parrot said: “Sir, may I ask what the chicken did?”
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Table 2.11a: Jokes

An Indian counterpart of this joke goes like this:

Sl. No.	Instances of joke
i	Ravi’s parrot was amazingly articulate. The only problem with his parrot was that it used expletives and unparliamentary words every now and then. Ravi tried but could not change the bird’s abusive language. Finally, he hired a saint to train it. A month later, the saint informed Ravi that the training is complete. He also informed Ravi that if he pulls the left leg of the bird the parrot would say gods’ names. In addition, if he pulls the right leg the bird would say spiritual leaders’ names. Excited Ravi asked “What if pull both the legs?” <i>əbe sale mē gr nəhī dʒaõga</i> (Slang won’t I fall down?) said the parrot.
ii	A ventriloquist is doing a show in out-of-the-way place and as part of his act he makes several jokes insulting the local residents. Finally a man in the audience who can’t take it any more stands up. He shouts, “Hey! You on stage! You’ve been making fun of us all night! We ain’t stupid, you know!” The ventriloquist responds, “Hey, relax, they’re just jokes!” “I’m not talking to you,” he shouts back, “but to that little smart-ass sitting on your knee!”
iii	A wife tells her husband, “I think the baby is coming. We’ve got to get to the hospital. There’s no time to lose!” Her husband leaps to his feet, goes to the door and as he runs out of the house he shouts to his wife, “It’s rush hour and the traffic’s gonna be heavy. So let’s take both cars so that at least one of us will get there on time!”

Table 2.11b: Jokes

Humour is a primordial companion of the human cognitive systems and it overarches the human beings’ communicative existence. Humour is a fact of humans’ social existence and it is one of the most fundamental attributes of the human-human communication events. However, there is something very ironic about this primordial and overarching phenomenon of human existence. The last few decades have seen a phenomenal rise in research on some fundamental aspects of human existence. The pace of research on Language and Cognition for instance has accelerated. Nevertheless, this is not true for humour. This does not undermine the noteworthy ideas that have emerged from individual and institutional research.

“Cognitive linguists working on humour will find theoretical foundations for their claim in two largely compatible lines of research: on the one hand, Attardo’s GTVH (an offshoot of Raskin’s Semantic Script Theory of Humor (1985), and Giora’s (1991, 1997, 2002, 2003) work on graded salience and optimal innovation on the other. Both approaches make claims that extend beyond the purely linguistic level of semantic (or constructional/grammatical) ambiguity.” Brône & Feyaerts (2003: 4)

The sharp rise on topics focussing on humour in cognitive linguistics research sounds good for humour research. The new interest that humour has generated among the cognitive linguists is a positive sign and the benefits of the new association have started to become evident. However, there is lot more remaining and a long way to go.

The cognitive research on humour points to two distinguishable but inter-related approaches. In one the focus is on the probabilistic factors that may influence the perception and production of humour. In the other, the focus is on experimental findings. These approaches are compatible to each other. Therefore, it is possible for a scholar to combine the two to study the topic of interest. Since the beginning of the 21st century the experiment-based findings have received greater importance in research than the speculation-based findings. However, the validity of experimental findings has often come under criticism. The criticisms surrounding the experimental findings basically target the methodology including the sample size of data, recruitment of the participants, the test environment etc. A particular criticism that is relevant to the present work is the categorisation/classification of the prospective participants for the experiments. Concerning this, the type-specific classification of the participants has dominated the experiment studies.

2.9.1. Type-specific categorisation versus traits-specific categorisation

The two most prevalent forms of categorisation available for participants of psychological experiments are type-specific categorisation and trait-specific categorisation. On the surface level, the two categorisations appear alike; however, they have implicational differences. The type-specific categorisation treats the participants as discrete categories whereas the trait-specific categorisation places the participants on a continuum. The type-specific categorisation is highly applicable in research involving socio-cultural phenomena. On the contrary, the trait-specific categorisation has advantages for studying psycholinguistic phenomena. Of the two, the type-specific categorisation is more prevalent than the trait-specific categorisation. The former provides absolute categories, whereas the latter offers dynamic categories. The present research employs the latter categorisation for categorising the participants qualifying for psycholinguistic experiments involving various instances of verbal humour. This way of participants' categorisation can account for variations in participants' response and is highly useful for predictive data.

The present work undertakes two traits-specific classifications of the participants; FIRO-B and JaI. The first is a standard instrument for measuring an individual's expressed and wanted behaviour with respect to inclusion, control and affection. The latter is a new scale for studying people's orientation towards jokes. All experiments that the relevant chapter reports have made use of these tools for the recruitment of the participants. The tools are compatible and highly suitable for traits-based research.

2.10. Summary

Verbal humour is a legitimate issue for scientific inquiry in Linguistics and Cognitive Science. Since formal and commensurable aspects of language have dominated the research traditions in Linguistics, verbal humour did not receive the attention it deserved. Even after the publication of Raskin (1985), this phenomenon has remained on the back burner of research in Linguistics while the scholars in cognitive sciences have started

taking interest in the phenomena of humour only recently. However, their involvement has provided positive direction to humour research and their achievements are easily noticeable. This chapter presented an overview of the scholarly works on humour in general and verbal humour in particular. At first, it discussed the phenomenon and offered various approaches to classify it. It looked at the origin of the concept and its manifestations in writings. Historically, humour has struggled to be part of intellectual debate. Some treatise on theatre and laughter had such an over-arching presence that the term humour did not even feature in scholarly writings. In modern times, scholars from diverse disciplines tried to understand the phenomenon. However, their treatment of humour and its sub-fields is highly disappointing as they failed to understand and discuss it in holistic manner. Most scholars in humour research and allied disciplines such as Linguistics, Psychology, Anthropology and Culture Studies have treated humour as a special phenomenon. Such a treatment of this phenomenon makes it not only extraordinary, but also beyond the compass of research. Consequently, various reasons verbal humour remained out of mainstream research of the concerned disciplines. Interestingly, humour did not find enough mention in Linguistic research until Raskin's *Semantic Mechanisms of Verbal Humor* appeared in 1985. Of late, the regular works of Salvatore Attardo, Willibald Ruch, Rachel Giora, Tony Veale, Greame Ritchie and Marta Dynel have provided plenty of insights into the working of humorous texts. Their work also gave new vigour and directions for research into the Linguistic and Cognitive aspects of humorous texts.

ⁱ See Attardo (1994: 3).

ⁱⁱ Castelvetro, Lodovico. (1505-1571) as cited in Attardo (1994: 42).

ⁱⁱⁱ The term non bona-fide communication or non bona-fide text may refer to unusual interactions. In this context they refer to humorous interactions including jokes. This term became popular through Victor Raskin's (1985) *Semantic Mechanisms of Verbal Humor*.

^{iv} Also spelled Panjabi jokes. These jokes are also popular as Sardar ji jokes.

^v Source: McGhee & Chapman (1980: xi)

^{vi} Source: Reader's Digest (December 2014) (Indian edition)

^{vii} Source: It was not possible to ascertain the authentic source of the items in this example.

^{viii} Source: Carr & Greeves (2006: 94).

^{ix} Source: WWKBH episode number 40. Originally the poem was recited in Hindi. The English version is author's own translation.

^x Source: WWKBH episode number 41.

^{xi} Source: WWKBH episode number 41.

^{xii} Source: Images accessed online on 30/03/2015 & 31/03/2015. www.google.com/images

^{xiii} The items in bold are brand names of biscuits/cookies that are popular across India.

Chapter 3

Theoretical approaches to Verbal Humour

3.1. Introduction

For a phenomenon like humour that is frequently occurring and commonly accessible, the folk theories tend to suppress the demand for a scientific inquiry. At times this results in situations when everyone, including the scholars, speaks something about the subject, everyone has an idea about it. This condition goes on until a new situation arises when there is a need to think beyond and investigate deeper into it. This necessitates new thinking and leads to the revision of ideas. A theory of humour should explicate the conditions that are necessary and sufficient for a phenomenon to be humorous. Accordingly, linguistic theory of humour should ascertain the conditions in which a text would be humorous. Raskin (1985: 47) argues that a theory of humour should formulate conditions for the texts in consideration to be funny. Ritchie (2010) is critical of the employment of traditional notions of ambiguity and sense relations for the analysis of humorous texts.

“It is normal for the analyses of humour to rely on informal but familiar notions from traditional linguistics, such as ambiguity or phonetic similarity, but these concepts are usually not defined within any overall linguistic theory. Instead, the meanings of these terms are left as intuitively clear to the informed reader.” Ritchie (2010: 34)

In addition, these theories should also demonstrate the similarity between humorous texts (Attardo 1994) and explain why some instantiations of humour fail. In other words, the linguistic account of humour should explain why under similar conditions some texts are humorous and others are not.ⁱ

There are three main objectives of this chapter. First, it intends to present theorisation and hypothesis building as indispensable behaviours of the human mind. Through this, it will try to justify the plurality of theories available for verbal humour. Second, it intends to put together the theories of humour that have emanated from various paradigms. The theories of Sociological, Psychological and Cognitive Linguistic orientations are significant to this chapter. As stated in the previous chapters, the central concern of this thesis is to examine the linguistic structures of verbal humour and account for the same from cognitive vintage points. Therefore, among these theories, this chapter explores the Cognitive-Linguistic theories of verbal humour in details. Accordingly, the section following this introduction argues that theorisation and hypothesis building are natural behaviours of the human mind. The next section discusses various approaches to the theory of verbal humour. Intersecting between the complementary sets of established and emergent theories of humour, this chapter tries to conjugate between the cooperating aspects of these theories of (verbal) humour. Arguably, Freud (1905/1960), Raskin (1985), Attardo (1994), Suls (1972, 1977 & 1983), Giora (1997, 2003 & 2004), Sperber & Noveck (2006), Turner & Fauconnier (1995), Veatch (1998) and Pete & Caleb (2010) have pioneered the theoretical engagements with verbal humour.

The works of the above scholars are outstanding, and the theories postulated by them merit elaborate discussions in research. Recently, Dubinsky & Holcomb (2011) and Goatly (2012) have also explored the interface between working of humour vis a vis

language sciences. The final section of this chapter comments on the plurality of humour theories and discusses the shortcomings of these theories.

3.1.2. Why theorise verbal humour?

Theories help in understanding the intricate phenomenon in a succinct way (Plester 2016). Theorisation about any naturally occurring phenomenon is a manifestation of the exploratory urge that is present by default in human beings. Theorisation is a special kind of thinking that provides the conditions for an event to occur and culminates into the precise and formal description of it.

Human intellectual traditions have always involved in this kind of thinking from various physical, social, psychological and economic perspectives. Consequently, they have had noticeable gains too. Following are some of the advantages of theorisation:

- a) Development of understanding about an issue/event or phenomenon
- b) Tracing the origin and advancement of the issue of concern
- c) Organisation of knowledge base
- d) Construction of rules for its occurrence and non-occurrence
- e) Accounting for its failures and variations
- f) Description in precise and formal ways
- g) Prediction of future behaviour
- h) Reproduction and reconstruction

In theoretical terms, Linguistics is perhaps the richest discipline in Humanities and Social Science streams. The theories of syntax (for instance, the Government and Binding Theory and the Minimalist Approach) or the theories of Phonology (for instance Auto-segmental Theory and Optimality Theory) have seen instant growth and excessive popularity. However, regarding the application, they have remained mostly context-free. In fact, there are fewer theories that can account for language use in contexts.

Verbal humour is one such instance where language in contextual use is the defining characteristic. However, the theoretical involvement of Linguistics in analysing verbal humour has remained petite. Verbal humour is a naturally occurring phenomenon. It has diverse features and several dimensions. Now, the question is why theories of verbal humour. A prompt answer is for all the above reasons. As theories have the responsibility to provide necessary and sufficient conditions for the phenomena to exist, the theories of verbal humour try to provide necessary and sufficient conditions in which a text remains humorous.

The theories of humour attempt to identify those beads that form the necklace called humour. In simple words, these theories interpret what is funny to who and why. Perhaps that is why scholars from several disciplines have attempted to theorise the behaviour of verbal humour. Naturally, this resulted in increase and diversification of humour theories. An important point to note here is that the theoretical explanations of verbal humour depend on their orientation. For instance, the theoretical interpretations of psychological orientations would highlight some aspect not equally relevant to that of the sociological orientations. In this context, it is important to consider and classify the approaches to humour theories.

3.2. Approaches to theories of verbal humour

It is not a surprise to note that this sub-section has the plural word ‘theories’ in its title. It goes without attestation that there is more than one theory of humour and the plurality of theories has a direct bearing on humour research. There are several reasons for the plurality of humour theories. Consider, for instance, the participation of scholarship from highly diverse fields of specialisation. Ritchie (2004) divides the theoretical postulations into universalist and descriptive. According to Dynel (2009: 4),

“the former embraces general proposals e.g. from a philosophical standpoint, meant to account for a wide range of humour phenomena, usually failing to produce adequate descriptions of real-life instances. On the other hand, the alternative approach entails conducting detailed analyses of particular humour phenomena.”

Attardo (1994: 1) groups the theories of humour into the following three types; (a) Essentialist theories, (b) Teleological theories, and (c) Substantialist theories. The Essentialist theories focus on the necessary and sufficient conditions for humour to occur. The Teleological theories describe what the goals of a humorous phenomenon are and how these goals affect the phenomenon. Finally, the Substantialist theories explore the unifying factor for the explanation of a humorous phenomenon.

Cognitive	Social	Psychoanalytical
Incongruity	Hostility	Release
Contrast	Aggression	Sublimation
	Superiority	Liberation
	Triumph	Economy
	Derision	
	Disparagement	

Illustration 3.1: Attardo’s classification of humour¹¹

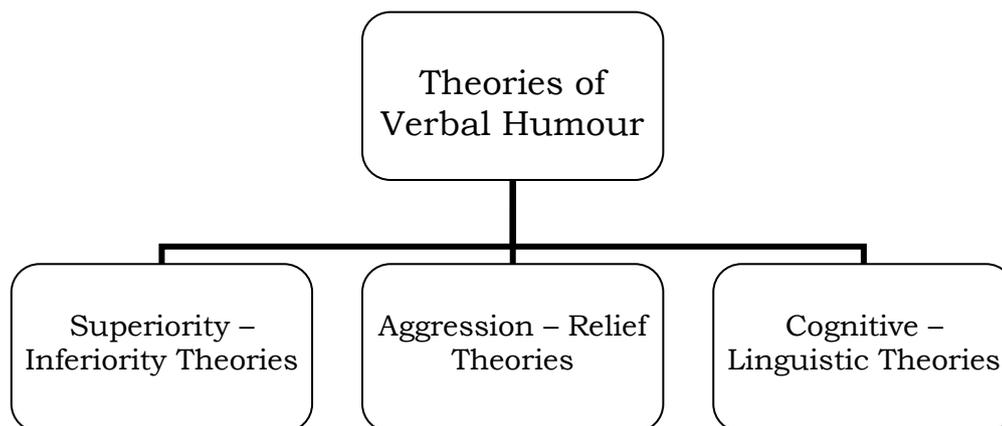


Illustration 3.2: Classification of theories of verbal humour

There have been numerous approaches to theorising the use and appreciation of humour in individuals under normal and psychosomatic conditions. This section considers three major approaches to the study of humour; Superiority-Inferiority, Aggression-Relief and

Cognitive-Linguistic. Therefore, the theories of humour appearing in the following section fall under one of these approaches.

3.3. The Superiority-Inferiority theories

The Superiority-Inferiority theories emerged from the observations that the socio-cultural and economic factors can influence one's use and appreciation of humour. Conversely, one use and appreciation of humour can provide information about his/her socio-cultural and economic background. The Superiority-Inferiority theories largely stick to the sociological aspects of humour. These theories argue that for an instance of humour to succeed somebody should be the target and the target's value must come down. Reflecting on the Superiority-Inferiority theories Mihalcea (2007: 413) finds humour as an expression of the superiority of one over another. These theories of humour base their arguments on social realities of human interactions. The two main arguments of these theories are (a) the exercise of verbal humour exists in the social domain, and (b) the instances of humour reflect many social determinants such as the following:

- (i) the lack of power equilibrium,
- (ii) the assertion of social bias and stereotypes
- (iii) acts of profiling, discrimination and exclusion
- (iv) acts of aggression and disparagement,
- (v) acts of insult, intimidation and impoliteness

Most instances of ethnic and religious jokes such as Panjabi jokes, Jewish humour, etc., reflect the above social determinants. By norm, they involve elevation or denigration of the person/group that is at the receiving end. The predominant mode of Superiority-Inferiority theories is degradation and misfortune of the target. That is to say, one person's laughter is at the expense of the other (target). The target can be anyone, including even the person who is narrating the joke. These instances of humour use reflect the lack of power equilibrium and politeness. These theories gain strength from humorous interactions that involve insults and disparagement. Solomon (2002) treats superiority as not a necessary and sufficient criterion for a text to be humorous. Conversely, he finds humour as instances of expressing ingenious virtue self-depreciation and modesty. Accordingly, he proposed inferiority account of humour.

The indications about Superiority-Inferiority determinants in humorous situations first appeared in Plato and Aristotlean discourses. However, these theories acquired patronage during the late medieval and early modern periods. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Henri Bergson (1859-1941) are two highly important figures who supported the Superiority-Inferiority theory of humour. Concerning laughter, that is the closest affiliate of humour, Hobbes maintains that it is a kind of sudden glory.

“...that the passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly.” Hobbes (1650/1840: 44)

However, for Bergson laughable is something mechanical upon living. Concerning the social theories of humour, most researchers have focused on the superiority theory and very few have discussed inferiority theory of humour.

Considering the fact that in humorous interactions a person can joke about himself/herself too, it is important to include the inferiority theory of humour in this discussion. Arguably, the mechanisms for imposing superiority or inferiority are same –

laughter at the expense of someone's misfortune, ignorance, disparagement and foolishness. Therefore, this section bears the title Superiority-Inferiority theory of humour. The justification for this nomenclature lies in the fact that all instances of superiority, disparagement or misfortune. Disparagement humour according to Janes & Olson (2015: 272) is a humorous material that causes funniness by belittling, humiliating or causing insult to somebody. These theories unravel various kinds of aspects of social living such as discrimination and bias based on gender stereotypes, economic status, lifestyle expenditure behaviour, food and clothing, religious practices, innocence, foolishness, etc. The Superiority-Inferiority theories are well equipped to explain the ethnic, religious, sexual and political humour. However, these theories do not perform equally well on other types of humour such as punning riddle, wordplay, funny one-liners, ambiguity based incongruity humour.

3.4. The Aggression-Relief theories

The Aggression-Relief (AR) theories are of psychological orientation. The term aggressive here refers to hostile and obscene whereas the term 'relief' refers to relief from sexual tension. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is the main inspiration for Aggressive-Relief type of theories. Though not many in number, they constitute a major group of theories that grew as compensation for the shortcomings of the Superiority-Inferiority theories. In his theory, *Jokes and their relation to the Unconscious* (1905/1960) and *Humour* (1928) Freud raised certain pertinent questions about the joking and the unconscious behaviour. The questions that concerned Freud include the following:

- a) Why do so many jokes contain sexual and aggressive themes?
- b) Why is laughter so enjoyable?
- c) What do joke preferences tell us about people's personality traits?
- d) How can we account for different forms of humour?

Freud (1905/1960) treated humour as an instrument for coping with painful, unpleasant and prohibited thoughts and offered three phenomena to explain laughter. These phenomena are the wit, the humour and the comic each of which helps in expressing "prohibited thoughts" and involves the release of psychic energy. In Freud's treatise, the wit represents verbal jokes, the humour represents the stress relieving and pleasurable acts, and the comic represents physical humour such as slapstick, mimicry, caricature, etc.

3.4.1. The Ambivalent Theory

The ambivalent theory of humour has its beginning in Louis Joubert's (1653) idea of a tussle between contrasting emotions such as happiness and sadness concluding into laughter. This theory is quite similar to the incongruity-resolution theories and its conceptual framework draws from the ideas of scholars like Louis Joubert, James Beattie, William Hazlitt, J. Y. T. Greig, and George Milner. According to the followers of this theory, humour evokes laughter among people because they do not know what to do, how to react and because they oscillate between certainty and uncertainty. Accordingly, laughter signifies tussle between contrasting emotions such as love and hatred. However, there is no formal description concerning the nature and extent of the tussle between the certainty and uncertainty and love and hatred.

3.4.2. The Pretence Theory

The ability to pretend is an important aspect of counterfactual humour. At the surface level, the skill to pretend appears trivial and gives negative connotations. However, from purely psycho-cognitive viewpoints it is significant because it prerequisites imagination and involves thinking about something that is absent and unreal as something present and real. The ability to pretend constitutes an important part of the socialisation process. This ability starts to develop among young children in the second year of their lives, when they have acquired the ability to construct some sentences and fight playfully (Leslie 1987). Pretention is significant in the relay and appreciation of verbal humour. Needless to say, pretention is necessary for understanding humour construction and comprehension because humorous acts involve two worlds/interpretations one of which may be unreal requiring the participants to be able to pretend. Pretence theory may be useful in explaining the cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour. However, the degree and the duration of pretention are never quantifiable for the piece of verbal humour that is under discussion. Due to lack of commensurability, this theory did not make significant headways among the theories of verbal humour, though it remains an important theory in understanding the working of irony.

3.4.3. The Misattribution Theory

The Misattribution Theory has its origin in Psychology. Zillman and Byrany (1980) were the first to propose this theory to explain humour comprehension. Many humorous performances in public places exploit misattribution to create humour. Their concept of misattribution is in contrast with Freud's tendentious and innocuous humour. According to Freud (1905) humour is \pm tendentious. He makes a distinction between tendentious humour and innocuous humour. Accordingly, the tendentious humour survives on the sufferings of somebody. In contrast, the innocuous humour survives on the playful use of language. The misattribution theory assumes that an instance of humour succeeds because it involves misattribution. A shortcoming of this theory is that it does not explain how much of misattribution is necessary. It also does not explain why every instance of misattribution is humorous.

3.5. The Cognitive-Linguistic theories

The humour researchers have always agreed that language is the most significant component of humour. In verbal humour, it is not only the medium to convey funniness but also to cause ambiguity and incongruity and thereby amusement. Even though the linguistic theories focus on the structural descriptions and meaning of the utterances, they have ignored the phenomena like verbal humour. They have shown a greater inclination towards the structural build-up of strings that are grammatical as well as conventionally acceptable and meaningful utterances than that which are grammatical but; unconventional and funny. Concerning the contributions of linguistic theory to humour research Ritchie (2004: 34) maintain that

“None of the many theoretical frameworks for describing language have made much of an impact on the analysis of humour. It is unusual to find a detailed account of some humorous phenomena framed in terms of the specific apparatus of any of the linguistic theories of the past century.”

3.5.1. The Incongruity-Resolution theory

The Incongruity-Resolution theories that grew at the same time when the Aggression-Relief theories were emerging argue that incongruity and resolution are structurally and conceptually most significant elements in humour. The following philosophers have made a significant contribution in the development of the incongruity theory. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). The term incongruity has appeared in numerous research fields. However, its meaning varies in contexts. In the context of humour research, it is natural for the term ‘incongruity’ to appear in almost all discussions. Most humour researchers have discussed incongruity as synonymous with dissimilar, inappropriate, disharmonious incompatible etc. Moreall (1983: 61) explains that incongruity is not synonymous with a difference of simpler kind. It is a violation of the patterns an individual has through his/her experience or imagination about the object or situation. The researchers in Cognitive Linguistics employ this term in the context of mismatch or discrepancy between the obvious and the intended meaning in humorous stimuli. Resolution refers to the detection of the incongruous elements. Together, incongruity and resolution provide the structural and conceptual necessities.

“In everything that is to excite a lively laugh there must be something absurd (in which the understanding, therefore, can find no satisfaction). Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing.” Kant (as quoted in Morreall 1987: 47)

Morreall (1987) is an important text from the incongruity resolution perspectives. He offers Kant’s and Schopenhauer’s ideas about humour and laughter (cf. Morreall 1987: 52).

“The cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation, and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity.” Schopenhauer (as quoted in Morreall 1987: 52).

One commonly agreeable point in all scholarly discussions concerning humour is that it involves ‘incongruity’ (Ritchie 1999 & Ritchie 2004). According to Shultz (1972: 457), incongruity is simultaneous occurrence of two or more incompatible elements. Though there is frequent mention, there is little agreement on what exactly incongruity means in the context of humour analysis and how researchers should present it formally. Expectedly, incongruity in humour remains an incommensurable and relatively subjective issue. According to Mey (2005: 70) it is a ‘cognitive conflict’ that taken place if what happens is unexpected.

“Incongruity and incongruity-resolution are two of the most central and frequently proposed concepts in humour theorizing, but there is no agreement about what they mean or about where they fit into a theory of humour.” Ritchie (2004: 58)

According to Kulka (2007) incongruity is a pre-requisite for humorous enjoyment, however, it is the resolution of incongruity that effects the humorous enjoyment.

Variants of IR Theory

The terms incongruity and incongruity resolution have occurred in most of the discussions of humour and a significant amount of research follow the IR theories.

However, it is difficult to state what IR theory is or name it. In this context, it is important to note that IR as such is not a single theory but a host term for various theories that utilise its riches. It is logical to call such theories as variants of IR theory. Among these theories Suls’ two-stage model and Surprise Disambiguation Models are of great significance.

3.5.2. Suls’ Two-Stage Model

The two-stage model has its origin in Suls (1972), Rothbart (1976) and Schulz (1976). Concerning the two-stage model, Ritchie (2004: 59) states:

“the punchline creates incongruity, and then a cognitive rule must be found which enables the content of the punchline to follow naturally from the information established in the set-up.”

Suls’ two-stage model is among the most frequently occurring theories in humour research. Though this model is not able to account for all kinds of humorous phenomena, its application to subsets of verbal humour such as puns and garden path humour is considerable.

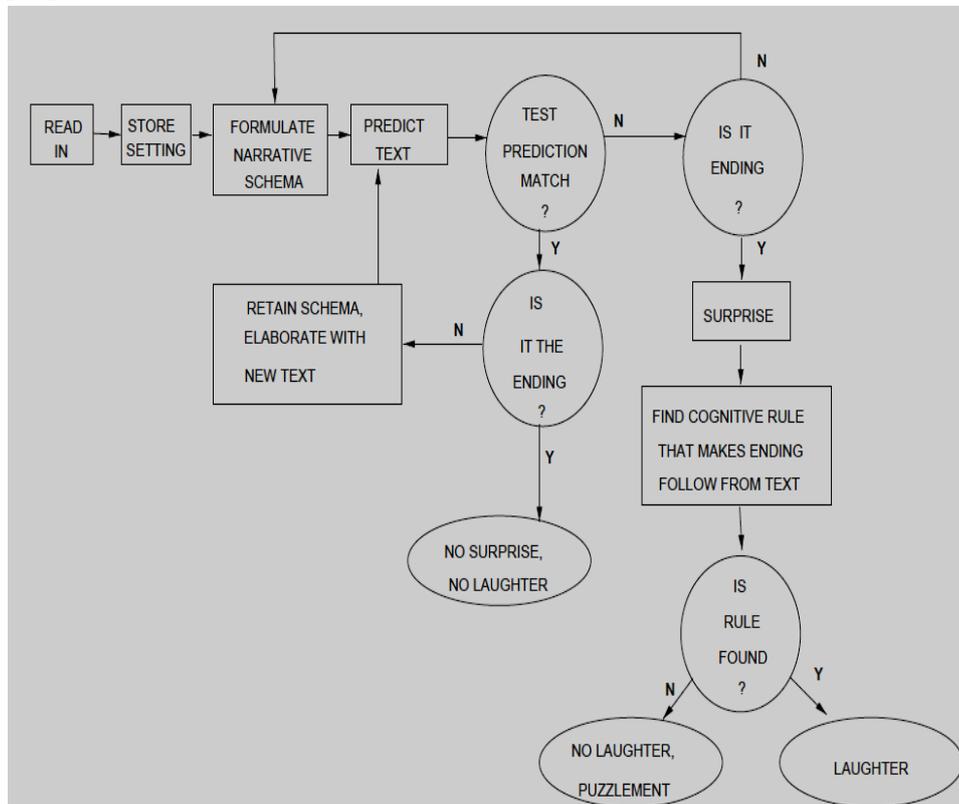


Illustration 3.3: Suls’ (1972) two-stage modelⁱⁱⁱ

This model analyses the jokes by dividing it into two parts; the set-up and the punchline. Accordingly, the set-up does not show any incongruity and add to the overall body of the text. However, the punchline creates incongruity by providing the incompatible information contents and meanings. According to this theory, a cognitive rule must follow the punchline. This cognitive rule exploits the information content of the set-up as well as the punchline.

3.5.3. Surprise Disambiguation Models (SDM)

Surprise disambiguation models (SDM) correspond to a group of models that are variants of IR theories. These models closely resemble Suls' two-stage theory of humour but differ from it in demonstrable ways. For instance,

Ritchie (1999) elaborates the SDM through the following formalisations:

- M₁: the first (more obvious) interpretation of the set-up,
- M₂: the second (hidden) interpretation of the set-up, and
- M₃: the meaning of the punchline

The relationships shared by M₁, M₂ and M₃ include obviousness, conflict, compatibility and inappropriateness. The hearer/reader identifies M₁ before M₂. M₃ is compatible with M₂, but incompatible with M₁. M₁ and M₂ do not agree.

The two-stage model and SDM appear alike. However, there carry subtle differences concerning the notions of ambiguity and incongruity. According to Ritchie (1999 & 2004), the SDM requires an ambiguous set-up; on the contrary, the two-stage model does not require ambiguity.

No single factor can fully explain the complex and multifarious nature of humour. Most accounts of humour have focussed on either funniness as the defining criterion of humour or incongruity as the reason for funniness. Given this, what can be the reason for failed humour? There is incongruity but no humour. Again, what about humour in which there is more than one incongruity? Will such instances of humour prove to be funnier than other instances of humour? In addition, what could be the reason for the experience of funniness in humour that does not have incongruity? These questions point to the fact that a single factor cannot account for all kinds of humour. The incongruity-resolution theories are essentialist as they only necessitate the availability of two or more incompatible scripts. However, they do not explain how such an incompatibility of scripts evokes humour and why not all incongruities are humorous.

Consequently, two major drawbacks of the incongruity theory are: (a) it fails to account for how much incongruity is optimum for humour to prevail and (b) why some instances of incongruity are humorous while others are not.

3.5.4. Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH)

Victor Raskin conceptualised the idea of describing the phenomena of humour through semantic and pragmatic standpoints. Raskin first conceived the idea in 1979 and later presented it in 1985 in *Semantic Mechanisms of Humour*. Raskin's theory Semantic Script-based Theory of Humour (SSTH) appeared as the first linguistic theory of humour. In *Humour Studies, Linguistics and Cognitive Science* the term 'script' is synonymous with 'Meaning', 'Schema' and 'Frame'. In SSTH, Raskin uses the term 'script' in the following sense:

"Formally or technically, every script is a graph with lexical nodes and semantic links between the nodes. In fact, all the scripts of the language make up a single continuous graph, and the lexical entry of a word is a domain within this graph around the word in question as the central node of the domain." Raskin (1985: 81)

Concerning the working of script in the day-to-day interaction Raskin maintains:

“A large chunk of semantic information surrounding the word or evoked by it. The script is a cognitive structure internalized by the native speaker and it represents the native speaker’s knowledge of a small part of the world. Every speaker has internalized rather a large repertoire of scripts of common sense which represent his/her knowledge of certain routines, standard procedures, basic situations etc.”

Raskin (1985) presents a formal description of the factors the presence or absence of which can determine the funniness of a joke. He identifies and codifies seven factors namely: the speaker (S), the hearer (H), the stimulus (ST), the experience (E), the psychology (P), the situation (SI) and the society (SO). Accordingly, a humorous act then is defined as the function HU.

$$HU(S,H,ST,E,P,SI,SO) = X,$$

where $X = F$ or $X = U$ standing for FUNNY and UNFUNNY, respectively.

In a successful humor act, $X = F$;

However, when a joke falls flat and in similar unfortunate situations $X = U$.

However, the above first formulation does not tell whose experience, psychology and society are involved. Therefore, Raskin reformulated humour function as;

$$HU(S, H, ST, E^h, P^h, SI, SO^h) = X$$

Here, the super script ‘h’ in E^h , P^h , and SO^h refers to hearer. Again, considering that the speaker’s personal experience, psychology and society might play a role in the determination of funniness, Raskin further reformulates the preceding function as;

$$HU(S, H, ST, E^s, E^{sh}, P^s, P^h, SI, SO^{sh}) = F.$$

In the new formulation, the super script ‘h’ in E^h , P^h , and SO^h refers to the hearer and the super script ‘s’ in E^s , E^{sh} , P^s and SO^{sh} refers to the speaker. Raskin (1985: 5-6)

Raskin’s hypothesis

Raskin (1985: 99) uses the following conditions to posit his theory; a text can be characterized as a single-joke-carrying text if:

- (i) A text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts.
- (ii) The two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite.

The two scripts with which some text is compatible are said to overlap fully or in part on this text. Raskin used the following joke to illustrate the *Semantic Script Theory of Humor*.^{iv}

Is the doctor at home? The patient asked in his bronchial whisper.
 “No”, the doctor’s young and pretty wife whispered. “Come right in”.

In the above joke, the lexical item ‘patient’ is compatible with two scripts, viz. PATIENT and LOVER. Of the two overlapping scripts, the former is compatible with the doctor while the latter is compatible with his wife.

Evaluation

Since its publication in 1985, the SSTH has constantly featured in humour related theoretical discussions and remains one of the most popular theories of humour. Researchers affiliating with wide and diverse disciplines such Linguistics, Computer Sciences, Anthropology, Sociology and Literature have drawn inspirations from it. Just to name a few, the salient aspects of this theory include the following:

- a) It is a formal description of humour

- b) It is the first semantic theory of humour
- c) It is applicable to various languages
- d) It is applicable to various text types such as jokes, punning riddles, short stories, irony and figurative language use etc.
- e) It is applicable to various domains such as Natural Language Processing, Machine Translation, Foreign Language Classrooms, Cultural Studies etc. all featuring the use of humour as a tool.
- f) It illustrated how jokes flout/violate the maxims of conversation that Grice proposed in 1975.

However, the SSTH has shortcomings too. Raskin and Attardo attempted to revise the ideas of SSTH. Attardo (1994: 207) offers a comprehensive assessment of the SSTH and the expansionist and revisionist approaches that followed presentation of SSTH.

3.5.5. Socio-pragmatic accounts of verbal humour

The researchers in Linguistics, as well as Humour Studies, agree that humour cannot succeed in the absence of socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, verbal humour along with its sub-genres naturally qualifies as rightful candidate for study under socio-pragmatics that is the study of meaning in socio-cultural context. This takes us to the next consideration; how can the theories and tools developed for the study of Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics explain the instances of verbal humour? However, before taking up this question, it is important to understand what kind of interaction is verbal humour. According to Raskin (1985) interactions such as jokes represent non bona-fide communication.^v

Concerning the socio-pragmatic aspects of verbal humour, meaning, power and politeness serve as unexceptionable instruments. In this context, the following scholarships have offered incredible insights:

- a) The maxims of conversation introduced by H. P. Grice (1975)
- b) The pronouns of power and solidarity studied by Brown & Gilman (1960), and
- c) The principles of politeness introduced by Leech (1983)

The above works offering ready-to-use tools for analysing language in social interactions have inspired several models of the socio-pragmatic use of language. For instance, Raskin's (1985) maxims of joke telling derive from Grice's 1975 maxims of conversation. Identifying jokes as instances of flouting and violation of Grice's maxims of conversation, Raskin (1985: 103) postulates the maxims of joke telling. Raskin treats humour and joke telling as non-bona-fide communication and rephrases Grice's maxims to present maxims of non-bona-fide communication. The new version of maxims is as following:

- a) Maxims of Quantity: Give exactly as much information as necessary for the joke;
- b) Maxims of Quality: Say only what is compatible with the world of the joke;
- c) Maxims of Relation: Say only what is relevant to the joke;
- d) Maxims of Manner: Tell the joke efficiently.

The issue of power is highly complex. From the viewpoint of social interaction, sociolinguistics and pragmatics Fairclough (1989) and Brown & Gilman (1960) are

landmark studies. Fairclough (1989) makes an important point concerning power relations. He says, power always refers to relations of struggle, using the term in a technical sense to refer to the process whereby social groupings with different interests engage with one another. According to him, power is not just a matter of language. It has two perceivable dimensions. The first is concrete and the second is abstract. The former has physical manifestations while the second has implicit products.

Brown and Gilman's (1960) paper studies the power-depicting pronouns of some related Indo-European languages. In this paper, they have explained the semantics of the pronouns of address and expressive style. According to Brown and Gilman (1960: 255), a person has power over another person in as much control s/he exercises over another. Again, Brown and Gilman (1960: 258) coin the term solidarity to refer to non-hierarchical and symmetrical relationships. In such a relationship, there exists equilibrium of power. What could be the case with humorous interactions? What power equations may exist in social interactions involving jokes, puns, riddles, wordplays and tongue twisters? Drawing from this, one can assume that in a humorous interaction involving two individuals the one who lacks power will be at the receiving end of the humour (the target or the butt of the joke). Consider instances of verbal humour that features gods. One can easily notice that power equation has changed. The verbal humour particularly jokes of the following types indicate power symmetry in a strikingly different way: (a) God-Human Jokes, (b) Employer-Employee Jokes and (c) Teacher-Pupil Jokes.

The issue of politeness in verbal humour has two dichotomous connotations; (a) quasi or pseudo impoliteness for rapport building and (b) the deliberate reduction of politeness. The former involves routine insults acceptable among friends. This may correspond to mock-impoliteness that is impoliteness without the intention of causing hurtful sentiments. According to Culpeper (1996: 352), mock-impoliteness is impoliteness that remains on the surface, because it does not intend to cause offence. This kind of impoliteness is useful for rapport building. It is highly prevalent among the peer interactions, sitcoms and stand-up comedy. Whereas, the latter makes use of stereotypes and evokes negative feelings. Culpeper (2005: 38) offers the following condition for impoliteness to occur: (i) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (ii) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-threatening, or (iii) a combination of (i) and (ii). However, the conditions offered by Culpeper are not able to distinguish between the polite and impolite or rank the extent to which an utterance is (im)polite. Therefore, it is difficult to employ his ideas into the analysis of verbal humour in the context of politeness.

Leech (1983: 109) offers three interdependent scales that are also relevant for the socio-pragmatics of verbal humour. The scales are as following: (a) the cost-benefit scale, (b) the indirectness scale and (c) the optionality scale.

The cost-benefit scale: This scale links politeness to loss or gain the hearer has in a speech act. The higher the cost, lesser the politeness and the higher the gain, greater the politeness. Therefore, in a humorous conversation the politeness remains directly proportional to benefit and inversely proportional to cost.

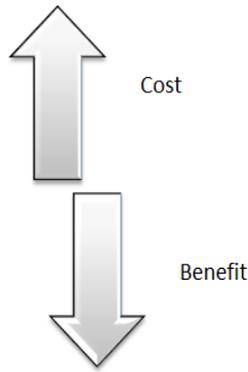


Illustration 3.4: Cost benefit scale

The indirectness scale: The indirectness scale links indirectness of speech with politeness. Indirectness in speech has often served as an instrument for politeness. Therefore, the indirectness in a humorous interaction is directly proportional to politeness.

The optionality scale: The optionality scale links choice (such as to be available or abstain from something, to take something or leave it and to do something or avoid it) to politeness. The presence of options is polite while the absence of options is impolite. In a humorous interaction, the presence of options for interpretation serves as an important strategy to avoid negative reactions from the hearers.

According to Leech (1983: 83), speech acts are bilateral entailing that, they are either ‘self-centred’ or ‘other-centred.’ This idea applies to most, but not all, instances of humorous interactions. The speakers in humorous interactions target either self or others. It is essential to note that the above instruments, meaning, power and politeness relate to humorous interactions in highly dichotomous ways. They cause the funniness when they are present and alternatively in some cases they cause funniness when they are absent. Therefore, it is safe to perceive them as lying on a continuum.

The principles of politeness are interrelated and work in tandem. Leech’s (1983) maxims draw heavily from the distinction between negative politeness and positive politeness. The negative politeness refers to acts of minimizing impoliteness, whereas positive politeness refers to the acts of enhancing politeness.

- a) The tact maxim: Concerns minimizing cost and maximizing benefit to others.
- b) The generosity maxim: Concerns minimizing benefit and maximizing cost to self.
- c) The approbation maxim: Concerns minimizing dispraise and maximizing praise of others.
- d) The modesty maxim: Concerns minimizing praise and maximizing dispraise for self.
- e) The agreement maxim: Concerns minimizing disagreement and maximizing agreement between self and others.
- f) The sympathy maxim: Concerns minimizing antipathy and maximizing sympathy between self and others.

Brown and Levinson’s (1987) idea of politeness derives from Goffman’s (1967) notion of face. Adverse situations cause face loss and auspicious situations cause face-lift. Interactions involving verbal humour often threaten face of the hearer/target. If there were no face loss, the disparaging humour would have failed miserably. Therefore, various instances of humour are often face threatening acts (FTAs).

Arguably, Grice's cooperative principles and maxims of conversation do not explicate the interactions that involve humorous and figurative exchanges. Leech advanced the politeness principles to compensate for the shortcomings of the cooperative principles. These approaches to understand communicative situations have always remained in need to work in an integrative manner, so that a robust socio-pragmatic account of humorous interactions can evolve.

Khan's social Cs of (verbal) humour

Khan (2016) proposed a socio-pragmatic theory of humour with the following name: *The social Cs of (verbal) humour*. This theory honours the view that humorous speech acts involve the expression of power and politeness. And, the actual instances of humour fall in two diametrically opposite categories of polite and impolite. Therefore, humorous speech acts are either polite or impolite. They either express power or express solidarity. According to this theory, the issues relating to the exercise of power and politeness in humorous interactions are decipherable through five Cs referring to the communicative acts of compare, conquer, counter, concede and collegiate.

Background

It is a common understanding that humorous interactions manifest the exercise of power by one interlocutor over the other. The presence of an initiator and a receiver typifies such interactions. In addition such interactions reflect upon expression of power to the extent that it becomes an act of repression.

Such interactions also reflect upon expression that would qualify as an act of resistance. It is also true that humorous interactions frequently employ linguistic behaviour that can range from polite to impolite. This theory explores the humour from the standpoints of power and politeness in everyday interactions. It examines the social aspects of verbal humour from following contrasting assumptions:

Assumption one:

A speaker who uses/initiates a joke wields greater power than the one who receives it or its target. The exponentially high number of ethnic and sexist jokes provides evidence for this assumption. In this case, the use of humour becomes an act of repression.

Assumption two:

A speaker who is the target of the joke wields greater power than the one who initiates it. The jokes about gods, employer-employee jokes and teacher-pupil jokes provide evidence for this assumption. In this case, the use of humour becomes an act of resistance.

The above assumptions are relevant to humorous interactions. Due to this uneven power dynamics, interactions involving jokes become instances of repression and resistance - two diametrically opposite phenomena. They exhibit unequal power dynamics as the acts of repression and resistance are opposite to each other. However, if one considers the wide range of social and interactive functions that humour performs it becomes obvious that humorous speech acts mainly revolve around comparison that can be polite or impolite and that can either exercise power or restrain from that.

In addition, humorous interactions can perform the following functions: conquer, counter, concede and collegiate. Consider the following illustration:

Cs	Acts	Power	Politeness
C ₁	Compare	± Power	± Politeness
C ₂	Conquer	+ Power	- Politeness
C ₃	Counter	+ Power	- Politeness
C ₄	Concede	- Power	+ Politeness
C ₅	Collegiate	- Power	+ Politeness

Illustration 3.5: The Social Cs of Humour

In the above illustration, the symbols + and – respectively refer to expression and avoidance of power and politeness. The symbol ± refers to exercise as well as avoidance. Since C₁ referring to the act of comparison involves expression as well as avoidance of power and politeness, it requires a symbol different from other Cs.

This theory focuses on the social and pragmatic functions of humorous interactions. It considers who initiates an instance of humour, with whom, in what manner and for what effect. Considering the socio-pragmatic aspects of language use and humour, this theory is highly significant because it assigns social functions to humorous speech acts and interprets such interactions in terms of expression or suppression of power and politeness.

3.5.6. The Relevance Theory

While Grice's Cooperative Principles containing maxims of conversations, Leech's Politeness Principles and Brown and Gilman's Power and Solidarity approach were making headways into the study of Socio-Pragmatics, Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory (RT) emerged as a Cognitive-Pragmatic account of communicative acts. The Relevance Theory (RT) is a theory of communication that seeks to explain how people understand utterances. The utterances in this context can be literal as well as figurative. Therefore, the proponents of RT claim it as a theory that can account for literal as well as figurative communication. RT is a recent development in the theories of communication and the credit for this theory goes to Sperber and Wilson (1986 & 1995). The term 'relevance' according to RT refers to the nature of inputs in relation to the cognitive processes. RT states that the ability to communicate is integral to humans as it involves interpretation of and response to verbal and non-verbal signals. In this theory, Sperber and Wilson make two basic claims;

- a) Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance.
- b) Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986: 260), the second claim refers to the Principle of Relevance while the first claim is a general assumption. The RT focuses on the role that context play in language processing. Since interpretation requires a fine amalgamation of the linguistic forms and contextual meaning RT tries to explain those instances of human interaction where the meaning lies distant from the linguistic forms. It considers the relevance of a statement according to the cognitive effect it has and the processing effort it requires. This implies two pairs of possibilities, each representing a continuum that works in tandem with other. Accordingly, under normal conversation when other conditions are equal;

- a) An utterance may involve *positive* cognitive effect or *negative* cognitive effect, and
- b) An utterance may require *small* processing effort or *big* processing effort.

Accordingly,

$$\text{Relevance} = \frac{\text{Contextual effects}}{\text{Processing effort}}$$

Illustration 3.6: Interpreting relevance

In both the continua, there are two antonymous attributes. The former attributes in both, yield relevance to utterance and success with conversation while the latter attributes in both, yield failure due to lack of relevance.

Following are the main assumptions of the Relevance Theory

- a) Every utterance has a variety of possible interpretations, all compatible with the information that is linguistically encoded
- b) Not all the interpretations occur to the viewer simultaneously
- c) Viewers are equipped with single, general criterion for evaluating interpretations, and
- d) The above criterion would filter all but one interpretation

Concerning communication between and among individuals the Cooperative Principle of Grice and Relevance Theory of Sperber & Wilson exhibit some similarities and differences. A subtle point of agreement between them is the ‘maxim of relevance’ in communication. However, the Relevance Theoretic account of communication contradicts the Gricean programme on the prevalence of cooperation as an essential element in communication. They also differ on the treatment of figurative utterances and violation of maxims. Obviously, the differences in their description exist because they are dealing with the same issue from different perspectives.

3.5.7. General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH)

Raskin and Attardo revised the SSTH, expanded its application and presented it with new formalism as General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH). According to Attardo (1994: 222):

“the SSTH was a semantic theory of humour, the GTVH is a linguistic theory at large – that is, it includes other areas of Linguistics as well, including most notably, textual linguistics, the theory of narrativity, and pragmatics.”

The GTVH considers all jokes as instantiations of Knowledge Resources (KR). Consequently, it proposes a set of six KRs that also aid the comparison among humorous texts and comparison between humorous and non-humorous texts. The formal description of GTVH is as follows:

Joke = {LA, SI, NS, TA, SO, LM} where LA stands for Language, NS stands for Narrative Strategy, TA stands for Target, SI refers to Situation, SO refers to Script Opposition and LM refers to Logical Mechanism.

LA is important for three reasons; it concerns the choice of words and phrases, it concerns the positioning of punchline/jabline and it concerns the structural symmetry of the joke. LA helps in establishing the distinction between verbal and referential jokes and it plays a deciding factor concerning the translation of a joke. Consider the following example:

Every good, attractive and tempting thing in this world
is either restricted or illegal or expensive or committed.

Here, the language use conceals the motive of the joke. The use of the word committed referring to the improbability of getting a sexual partner comes at the end to act the punchline of the joke.

NS is primarily a substitute for genre. Every joke has a narrative strategy like question-answer format, wordplay, riddle, ridicule etc. It is important because it decides the style of presentation of the joke. Consider the following example:

Why do students write *etc* in their answers?
The word *etc* stands for End of Thinking Capacity.

Here, the narrative strategy is the use of abbreviation/acronym. The reader/listener would be surprised to find a familiar abbreviation/acronym expanded into something unfamiliar and hilarious but false.

TA refers to the butt or recipient of the joke. In most instances of aggressive humour such as ethnic, humour, sexual humour, political humour etc. there is a recipient of the criticism and ridicule. The target can be an individual, a group, a nation, even a government, or its policy. If a joke is not aggressive, its TA does not have any element. Consider the following example:

Girl to boy: Why are you looking so upset?
Boy: My parents want me to have everything that they did not get.
Girl: That is so nice of them, and you are upset.
By the way, what did they not have?
Boy: A+ in all subjects.

Here, the target of the joke is the parents' unjustifiable desire for high score from their child.

SI refers to what the joke is about and it may refer to the topic, condition or issue. All jokes necessarily present a situation; however, the funniness may or may not depend on the situation completely. Consider the following example:

If you want to see beautiful girls and boys even after your death,
please donate your eyes.

Here, the situation is 'organ donation' that is not as frequent as the gazing of people of opposite gender. The funny one-liner here presents a familiar situation to develop readiness for an unfamiliar situation.

LM concerns the way in which the two or more interpretation of the joke appear to the reader/listener. The LM is helpful in deciding whether the scripts in a joke maintain opposition or compatibility or not. LM is important as it deals with concealment,

foregrounding and reinterpretation. It can affect the size and presentation of the joke and it works in coordination with other KR's such as LA and NS. Consider the following example:

Answer the following question in YES or NO.
Do you friends know that you are mad?

Here, the logical mechanism is putting a perplexing question where both the choices available would cause lowering of self-respect. Saying yes would mean that the friends are aware that the person is mad while saying no means that the friends are not aware of the fact but the person is mad for sure.

SO refers to the two conflicting situations that arise in a joke where the hearer/reader picks up the obvious and literal and misses out the metaphorical only to notice it later. The nature of **SO** is similar to the **LM** as both work implicitly. It is important to note that all jokes will offer **SO**. Consider the following example:

The greatest advantage of speaking truth is that
You do not need to remember what you said.
Moral: Lying increases the memory power.

Here, the script opposition takes place between **TRUTH** and **LYING**. The reader/listener would expect one more line on speaking truth but ironically receives a line mischievously supporting the unpopular but frequent act of lying. Putting the same in tabular form one has the following:

KR	Elaboration
LA	Choice of word and phrases.
NS	Choice of style like quizzing or informing and pace of delivery.
TA	Choice of social bias and cultural stereotypes.
SI	The topic or the issue
SO	Unexpected or conflicting interpretations
LM	Cognitive strategies

Table 3.1a: The scheme of GTVH

KR	Instance in doctor's wife-patient joke
LA	No. Come right in.
NS	Conversation and ambiguity
TA	Wife's fidelity
SI	Treatment and love making
SO	Cure and love making
LM	Indirect answer and concealment of information

Table 3.1b: Application of GTVH on Doctor's wife joke

An issue that arose along the development of GTVH is the ordering of the KR's. It required the hierarchical presentation of the KR's. According to Attardo,
... various considerations of interdependence and/or independence among the KR's have allowed the determination of the hierarchical organization.



Illustration 3.7: Hierarchical organization of the KR^s^{vi}

Further, Attardo considers the parameters to influence each other; especially the ones on top would determine the ones below them. This appears to be slightly problematic because according to this organisation SO has nothing to influence it while LA has nothing to influence. This hierarchical organisation does not appear natural or logical. A proposal worth consideration is why not ignore the linear or hierarchical organisation of the KR^s and treat them as dynamically operating.

Evaluation

Raskin and Attardo's (1991 & 1994) General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) proved to be the theoretical cornerstone of the linguistic research on humour. The GTVH is advancement over the SSTH and takes care of various shortcomings of its predecessor. It is holistic in nature and addresses a wide range of texts. However, an issue that needs attention is the hierarchical organisation of the KR^s. GTVH is useful for Computational Linguistics. Several researchers have tested the working of GTVH and found it useful. Even after two decades of its origin, it remains valid as ever.

3.5.8. Marked Informativeness and Optimal Innovation Hypothesis

According to Giora (1997 & 2003) it is optimal innovativeness that is pleasing rather than metaphor or figurative meaning of the utterance. The Optimal Innovation Hypothesis (2003) says pleasurability is sensitive to Optimal Innovation rather than to figurativeness. A stimulus is optimally innovative if it evokes

- (a) a novel – less or nonsalient – response alongside
- (b) a coded salient response from which, however, it differs both quantitatively and qualitatively, so that both can be weighed against each other.

Giora makes a distinction between pure innovation and optimal innovation. Optimal innovation is more likely to produce pleasurable experience than pure innovation. Accordingly, optimal innovation is more likely to cause funniness than pure innovation. Consider the two classroom situations given below:

Situation A: You enter into the classroom and see a crow sitting on the teacher's chair.

Situation B: You enter into the classroom and see new chairs and projector facilities.

Situation A is more likely to cause funniness than situation B.

3.5.9. Mental Space and the theory of Conceptual blending

Conceptual combination and conceptual blending are useful in understanding human cognitive abilities as they involve integration of knowledge from distinct sources. They are identical, but are relatively different ideas. Conceptual combination refers to combinations that one arrives at by combining linguistic concepts. For instance consider the following compounds in English *attendance register*, *oceanic blue*, *jungle fire* etc. However, conceptual blending refers to an integrational process that involves the application of cognitive structures from a wide spectrum. Another name for conceptual blending is conceptual integration.

The use of language in everyday interactions is not just putting together of words and sentences in logical fashion. There is a lot integrations taking place in simple, idiomatic, creative and humorous interactions.

“People pretend, imitate, lie, fantasize, deceive, delude, consider alternatives, simulate, make models, and propose hypotheses. Our species has an extraordinary ability to operate mentally on the unreal, and this ability depends on our capacity for advanced conceptual integration.” Fauconnier & Turner (2002: 217)

In this context, it would be facilitative to take into consideration the assorted purposes for which the human beings use the language. In other words, knowing what people do when they communicate would be highly facilitative in developing an understanding about the human cognitive system. The idea of mental space that plays an important role in comprehension activities and drawing logical inferences attracted considerable attention in cognitive science and Linguistics.

“Mental spaces are small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action. Mental spaces are very partial assemblies containing elements, and structured by frames and cognitive models. They are interconnected, and can be modified as thought and discourse unfold. Mental spaces can be used generally to model dynamical mappings in thought and language.” Fauconnier & Turner (2006: 307)

Fauconnier put forth the theory of Conceptual Blending in 1995. This theory, also popular as Blending theory, is an advancement over the theory of Mental Space put forth by Fauconnier in 1995. Conceptual blending or conceptual integration is an abstract but essential mental operation that is evident in imagination, analogies, reasoning and expertise. Turner & Fauconnier (1995: 3) maintain that blending is a phenomenon of everyday life. Human beings involve into this marvel when they are doing creative thinking, solving puzzles, doing mathematics or even joking.

“Blending is a general cognitive operation, operating over categorization, the making of hypotheses, inference, and the origin and combining of grammatical constructions.” *ibid*

The claims of the above theories are formidable. However, there is very little empirical data to substantiate their claims. In addition, it is difficult to draw the line of demarcation between some essential ingredients these theories have used and discarded.

3.5.10. Normal Violation Theory

Thomas Veatch proposed the Normal Violation Theory in 1998. Veatch published this theory in the international journal HUMOR with the title *A Theory of Humor*. In this theory, Veatch tries to explore the necessary and (jointly) sufficient conditions for the perception of humour. According to this theory, humour occurs when things are normal (N) while at the same time something seems wrong (V). N and V are essential conditions of this theory and the order of appearance of N and V can either be N+V or V+N. However, the absence N or V will definitely limit the funniness of jokes. Accordingly, if there is a humorous interaction and somebody does not laugh the reason could be the absence of either N or V from the point of view of the person who does not laugh. Consider the following joke:

Question: Why did the monkey fall from the tree?
Answer: Because it was dead.

(Source: McGraw & Warren 2010: 15)

3.5.11. Benign Violation Theory

Pete and Caleb (2010: 1148) remodelled Veatch's Normal + Violation (N+V) Theory of humour to propose Benign Violation (B+V) Theory. The two versions appear similar, differing merely in their titles. However, they differ in their approach. According to the N+V theory humour causes funniness when there is violation in the normal conditions, however, according to the B+V theory humour causes funniness only when there is something wrong or unsuitable at the micro level but the same thing is normal and acceptable at the macro level. This juxtaposition of contrasting views determines the success of the jokes. Therefore, a situation in which somebody falls from the chair but remains unhurt is more likely to cause funniness.

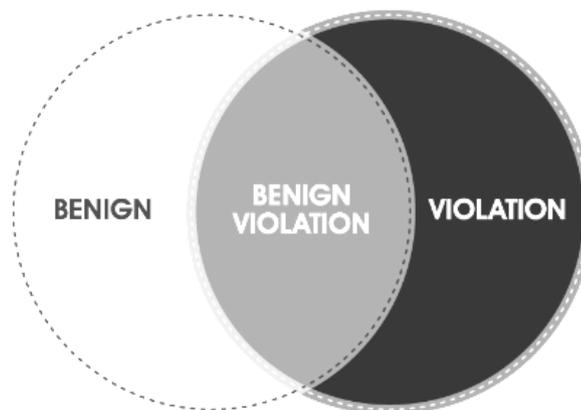


Illustration 3.8: The Benign Violation Theory^{vii}

3.5.12. Text-type Approach and Mention Theory

Since every event of verbal humour is an example of a narrative, the text-type approach is interesting and useful to understand verbal humour from a narrative perspective. Text-type approach has received good attention in linguistics as well as literary studies. According to Geogakopoulou (2008)

the notion of text-type has been proposed as a principle of abstraction and classification, an analytical category that aims at capturing structural, functional, and other conventionalised patterns of usage in narrative.

Sperber and Wilson (1981) advanced the ‘mention theory’ that captures the distinction between the use and mention of a conceptual entity. The careful employment of both use and mention in a single speech act has been the cause of funniness in many instantiations of verbal humour.

Clarke (2009) is a strikingly different approach to humour. It treats humour as an information-processing faculty and interprets humorous stimuli in terms of patterns. There are two significant aspects of this work; first, it claims that humour is not merely about jocularity, it is more of a cognitive process and second, it claims that a set of eight patterns will be able to interpret all phenomena of humour. Drawing from the Pattern Recognition Theory Clarke (2009: 15) claims that there are only eight patterns, by which one can explain all varieties of humour of all culture and civilizations.

According to Johnson (1976: 22)

... the meaning of any given joke arises from the interplay of many layers of bisociation, deriving from the most specific utterances and social context to the most general principles of logical paradox and social ideology.

The text-type approach and its synonymous counterpart mention theory are helpful in comprehending the linguistic aspects of verbal humour. Structurally, all instances of verbal humour contain ambiguities. Therefore, it is inevitable to distinguish between the script that has merely occurred and the one that occupies the focus. The text-type approach and the mention theory help in maintaining such distinctions in humorous utterances.

3.5.13. Cognitive Consistency and Cognitive Dissonance

Marlich (2007) and Cooper & Goren (2007) present an overview of the concepts ‘cognitive consistency’ and ‘cognitive dissonance’ respectively. According to Marlich (2007: 148) “cognitive consistency is one of the earliest concepts associated with social psychology.” He uses the term ‘cognitive’ in its usual sense that relates to thoughts and attitude. In addition, by ‘consistency’, he refers to the balance and symmetry across cognitions. Therefore, combined together the expression ‘cognitive consistency’ refers to a harmonious state of mind. In this state, there is no conflict of ideas & intentions and an individual’s behaviour is in harmony with his/her beliefs. Marlich (ibid.) recommends the use of ‘cognitive consistency’ as a tool to understand social psychology explain the diverse aspects of human behaviour. In contrast, cognitive dissonance is an unpleasant emotion and causes disharmony of the mental states. Cognitive dissonance according to Cooper & Goren (2007) is the aversive state of arousal that occurs when a person holds two or more ideas that are inconsistent with each other.

Given that pleasant is desirable whereas unpleasant is undesirable, most research converge on the following; humans in their day-to-day interaction expect the pleasant and their response to that would be normal whereas the onset or overdose of the unpleasant would adversely affect their response to the communicative event. If this were the fact then what could be the reason for normal joking situations?

3.5.14. The phraseology account

Phraseology concerns how words occur in the language use is. In Linguistics, phraseology initiated a new tradition that ran contrary to the generative paradigm. The central argument of phraseology is that in social interactions words in themselves are hollow. Arguably, words do not occur in isolation and the speakers mostly derive the meaning of an individual word by the phrase in which it occurs or by other words that surround it. This behaviour of words is relevant in the interpretation of humour as well. Some instances of humour are humorous primarily because of the phrase containing the word that gets credit for causing funniness. Considering how words and phrases affect funniness in humorous interactions, it is important to understand ways of phraseology. Phraseology has acquired an important place within cognitive linguistics and construction grammar. There are two parallel traditions in the study of phraseology; (a) the lexicographic tradition and (b) the distributional tradition. The main difference between the two is concerning the treatment of individual lexical items. The lexicographic tradition considers only opaque expressions such as idioms and multi-word expression suitable for phraseology. On the contrary, the distributional tradition employing non-semantic criterion that considers frequency of occurrence an important factor. The difference between the two traditions is significant from the perspective of theoretical paradigms. However, both are equally useful in the analysis of verbal humour. It is important to note that finally meaning is phrasal in nature.

3.5.15. Theory of Lexical Priming

The Theory of Lexical Priming is a new theory of words and language that Michael Hoey advanced in 2005. This theory bases itself on collocation and naturalness of words. In the introductory discussion, Hoey criticises the traditional views of the mental lexicon vis a vis grammatical operations. Concerning the behaviour of the word and other systems in the lexis, Chomsky (1957 & 1965) maintains that the grammatical structures come first and the words fit into them later. Advancing this view, the Functional linguists assume that the choice of words is the last thing to happen in the process. Opposing this view, Pinker (1994) argues that semantics comes first and other systems follow. Taking a middle path, Hudson's (1984) Word Grammar observes strong connections between the lexical and syntactic behaviour. In addition, Fillmore et al. (1988) in Construction Grammar approach do not observe syntax and lexicon as distinct entities. This way one can observe not only two distinct views and two collaborative ideas on the working of the mental lexicon. However, Hoey (2005) finds all of them favouring what can be 'possible' in the language use and ignoring what is 'natural' in it. Therefore, his work mainly rests on naturalness of combinations represented in the lexicon. The term natural in this context refers to the highly pervasive phenomenon of collocation. Collocation refers to the way words combine with each other to result in compounds, idioms, phrases and sentences. What makes collocation a distinguishing aspect of the human language is its correspondence with the psycholinguistic process of priming. According to Hoey (2005), "every word is mentally primed for collocational use" and it has productive as well as receptive manifestations. Consider the following jokes:

Sl. No.	Jokes
	A couple went out to dine. After the food, the husband went to pay the bill, while the wife went to

i	wash her hand. When the husband returned he saw his wife washing the washbasin. Feeling embarrassed he asked her why she was washing the basin. She replied the instruction on the wall read Wash Basin.
ii	Police to a thief: Don't you feel ashamed to be in police station every month? Thief: Do you feel ashamed to be here every day?
iii	In a get-together party one handsome boy asked a pretty girl: Do you want to dance? The girl said yes and went to the floor. The boy said "Thank you for leaving the seat."

Table 3.2: Jokes

In the above example, all three items have conversations that involve grammatical and meaningful sentences. However, they do not occur in the concerned manner. Therefore, Hoey's idea of priming and collocational candidates for words as the theory of lexical priming presents can account for language use in humorous and non-humorous contexts.

3.5.16. Signal Strength Theory

Khan (2014) proposed the Signal Strength Theory for humour comprehension. This theory bases itself on the psycholinguistic findings related to language processing. According to this theory, the humorous stimuli resemble the normal interactions. Therefore, there processing does not necessitate special endowments. The comprehension of humorous stimuli follows the parallel processing model. When there is a humorous stimulus, multiple signals originate to qualify as the interpretation. As the interaction progresses, these signals start varying in strength. The different levels of strength include; strong, medium and weak. The punchline establishes link with the strongest signal.

—————▶	Strong strength: Corresponds to the highest probability.
-----▶	Average strength: Corresponds to the moderate probability.
- - - - -▶	Weak strength corresponding to the lowest probability.

Illustration 3.9: Varying strengths of perceptual signal

In a humorous situation there is a shift in the signal strength. There is a shift in the strength of the access signal in the lexical item or the expression that serves as the punchline. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Instances of variation in lexical priming
I	Know hope or no hope
ii	What is the opposite of nobody?
iii	Renew your sole / Renew your souls

Table 3.3a: Variation in lexical priming

Sl. No.	Instances of variation in lexical priming
i	sɪkʃək: kəl kɪtne prəkər ke hē? Teacher: How many types of tenses are there? tʃʰɑ:ɾ: tʃər prəkər ke: lokəl, estɪdɪ, aresdi, ɔr sətʃrɪjakəl Student: Four. Local, STD, ISD and <i>satsriyakal</i> (the Panjabi way of greeting).

ii	Leave application by an employee: Dear Sir, My wife is ill. There is no other husband to take care of her. So please declare it a holiday today.
iii	Sardar used to forget his computer password. Finally, he set his INVALID so that the computer would automatically remind him.

Table 3.3b: Variation in lexical priming

The basis of Incongruity Theory is the fact that all instances of humour embody some sort of unexpectedness or inconsistency or contradiction, a kind of difference between what the interlocutors expects and what s/he finds. This theory developed along the works of scholars like James Beattie, Immanuel Kant, and Arthur Schopenhauer. Presently, the incongruity theory is the most influential theory of humour in Linguistics and Philosophy. The incongruity theories are compatible with various cognitive linguistic theories of humour.

3.6. Theories of humour: A retrospect

The above discussions have among their consequences, the truth that some disciplines lead in humour research while others still struggle. Overall, this has rendered the knowledge about verbal humour not only fragmentary but also lopsided. Most humour theories that claim to be theories of humour perform best within a finite set of the genres of humour. Concerning the vastness and dynamic nature of the phenomenon, it is not possible to propose an all-encompassing theory. Therefore, despite the need and despite diverse contributions from various fields a comprehensive theory of humour remains a distant dream. The absence of a comprehensive or definitive theory of humour does not dwarf the significance in terms of applicability of the available theories. In fact, they have been rather successful with respect to certain subsets of humour. One identifiable reason behind the inapplicability of the available theories is the researchers' misunderstanding about the theory. In this connection, Raskin (2008) offers valuable arguments.

If the theories are not adequate to account for the phenomenon, why do researchers stick to them? A simple reason is their predictive capacity. Besides, though the humour theories lack robustness, they provide a ground to test the knowledge, analyse the data and explore the questions systematically. It is important know how the theories and tools available today can assist the integration of knowledge about humour. The theoretical findings in humour research would receive greater application if the researchers focus on the specific genres of humour and develop theories for its individual forms. The pursuit of a comprehensive theory will continue to be a distant dream unless the smaller components of this vast enterprise become part of the theoretical articulations.

The superiority theory of humour is among the oldest accounts of humour and was dominant during the medieval times until the psychological accounts of humour took over the reins. The psychological accounts passed on the baton to incongruity theories, which are mostly prevalent today also fail to explain the phenomena of humour or its subsets in their entirety. An interesting point about these theories is that all of them have succeeded in some way and have failed in certain other way. The theories of humour fail to account for the phenomenon in its all manifestations. However, this does not mean that the phenomenon is unanalysable or the theory is irrelevant. One of the problems of humour

theories is that they are mostly ad hoc theories, that is to say they are not exclusively humour theories. Concerning this, SSTH, GTVH and SD theories are exceptions to the rest.

3.6.1. Diverse theories and their applications

The number of humour theories is large and keeps growing. This outgrowth at times poses the following pertinent questions:

- a) Why are there so many theories of humour?
- b) What are the researchers supposed to do with so many theories of humour?

Since verbal humour varies in its types and definitions the availability of these theories helps to account for the various types of humour. In the absence of a comprehensive theory of humour, a specific theory can explain certain type(s) of humour adequately, but it might fail for other types. In such a situation, the plurality of theories becomes not only useful, but also necessary. Besides, it is also important to note that humour is an age-old phenomenon. The changing times have added newer perspectives to it and with that, the number of theories have kept rising. The multifarious nature of verbal humour and the plurality of disciplines that engage with it have made it virtually impossible for any single theory or method to explain it sufficiently and satisfactorily. A robust account will have to depend on multiple sources of explanation. Therefore, besides incongruity the cultural context and the humour orientation of individuals also play a significant role.

3.7. Summary

Theorisation is a natural process that can be termed ‘thinking in an organised and systematic way.’ It is a unique endowment of the human mind because it concerns a systematic thinking about the necessary and sufficient conditions for something to exist/occur. Therefore, theorisation has been an important activity across cultures and the times. This chapter discussed a range of humour theories advanced by scholars from various concerning disciplines. It also analysed the causes and consequences of plurality of humour theories. These aspects may seem to appear at distinct points of a continuum but they are integral to Humour Studies. Consequently, the internal structure of verbal humour, the response they evoke and their theoretical interpretations constitute the bases of most research on verbal humour.

Verbal humour is an unexceptionable phenomenon of social interaction that occurs in highly diverse forms. The theoretical account of verbal humour is also quite diverse. While some theories are specifically humour theories, others are ad hoc theories applied to the phenomenon of verbal humour. One of the problems with the early theories of humour is that they did not base their claims on the psycholinguistic aspects humans subjects. They did not conduct psychological experiments to vindicate the claims they were making and focussed mostly on the semantic description of the jokes. One point in defence of these theories is that psycholinguistics as a discipline was in a nascent stage those days. However, keeping in mind the claims these theories make this shortcoming deserves an attention. This is not to say that there are no experimental findings at all, however, the theories they projected are not the theories of humour. In fact, most of them are theories of meaning or comprehension.

Another commonly noticeable problem with the theories of humour is that they do not account for the degree of funniness in a humorous text. The theories of humour either state the necessary and sufficient conditions in which a text can be humorous but they do not offer discussions on the variable degrees of funniness of humorous texts. Accordingly, the humour theories can pass judgement on humour or no humour, they can tell what is causing funniness in a text but they cannot illustrate how two humorous texts differ on the scale of funniness. Understandably, the reason behind this neglect could be that the degree of funniness is a subjective judgement and it requires qualitative judgement, however, for the fact that funniness varies through humorous texts requires an attention that has remained missing so far.

The name 'Humour Studies' is highly suitable for humour studies because in pedagogy 'Studies' is a new trend pointing to undefined boundaries and the participation of diverse fields of study. Humour is cross-disciplinary by nature. The participation of somewhat very distant disciplines in humour analysis does not evoke any surprise. Consequently, humour theories too became diverse in their roots and multivalent in their application. One problem that the scholars have often cited is that the lack of a 'unified' theory of humour. This concern for 'a unified theory of humour' is inappropriate. There are two ways to look at its inappropriateness. It is inappropriate because there is lack of specification about where such a theory will find its application. What is the necessity of developing a 'unified theory' that emerges from the interactions of several disciplinary pursuits and still has a disciplinary character or is still applicable to a conventional discipline? What is the application of such a theory? Is there a model for such a theory? The above arguments and questions tell us that the pursuit of 'a unified theory of humour' is inappropriate.

There are several ways to explain how and why such a theory would fail. First, it would fail because there would be unforeseen demand for its application. Unforeseen demand here refers to the changing trends in academic and scholarly circles. The birth of new disciplines and change in foci of some disciplines would actually demand for newer tools to explicate the phenomena of their concern.

The salient features of this chapter are as following: First, it argued in favour of theorization of humorous phenomenon. Second, it reorganised the existing theories of humour on the basis of similarities of approaches. Thirdly, it discussed the major theories of verbal humour in details. Finally, it proposed two new theories of humour.

The first takes into consideration the social aspects and has the following name: *The social Cs of (verbal) humour*. This theory assigns socio-pragmatic interpretations to the dichotomous behaviour of humour considering functions such as compare, conquer, counter, concede and collegiate and impact such as \pm power and \pm politeness in humorous interactions. Accordingly, it applies to decode the instances of repression and resistance in day-to-day communication.

The second theory considers the psychological aspects of humour interpretation and has the following name: *Signal strength theory of verbal humour*. This theory derives from the fact that an utterance can have multiple interpretations with varying degrees of prime.

The discussion on the theoretical approaches to verbal humour will remain inconclusive without an honest admission of the fact that contemporary humour theories have been successful in describing the necessary conditions for humour to exist. However, they are yet to ascertain the sufficient conditions for humour to occur. Even though some of them claim to offer necessary as well as sufficient conditions, they are

applicable to some specific sub-fields of humour. In fact, a large majority of humorous instantiations remain outside their explanatory reigns.

Concerning the development of a comprehensive theory of humour it remains a fact that humour research is very much in the same position today as it was when it just took off. It is difficult and imprudent to reduce verbal humour to a set of algorithms and rules.

ⁱ Cf. Raskin (1985: 47).

ⁱⁱ Source: Attardo, Salvatore. 1994. *Linguistic theories of humor*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

ⁱⁱⁱ Source: Suls (1972).

^{iv} Source: Raskin (1985: 32). Originally, from 20th Century American.

^v For non-bona-fide communication, see Raskin (1985).

^{vi} Source: Attardo, Salvatore. 1994. *Linguistic theories of humor*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

^{vii} Source: McGraw, Peter & Caleb Warren. 2010. Benign violations. Making immoral behavior funny. *Psychological Science*. 1141-1149.

Chapter 4

Linguistic mechanisms of verbal humour

4.1. Introduction

Verbal humour is a language material, and its use is a linguistic exercise. The idea appears simple at the outset but at a deeper level, it is extraordinary. What is extraordinary about verbal humour is that it evokes widely varying responses. Without the creative use of language, verbal humour is nothing. Language lends itself to humour (Blake 2007: x). The various forms of verbal humour show how natural languages abound with scope for ambiguous constructions and alternative interpretations that evoke amusement and funniness in people.

Verbal humour and its sub-genres such as jokes, puns, riddles, tongue twisters, parodies, satires and spoofs collectively form an outstanding phenomenon that exhibits a marvellous coordination between the human language and the human mind. They are ingredients of entertainment discourse, and the ability to use them judiciously is a highly desirable milestone in an individual's life. They are also exemplary substances for research in Linguistics, for they demonstrate structural manipulation and wordplay at the level of language and show forced reinterpretation and reverse engineering at the level of cognition. The lexical and structural manipulations in verbal humour include unorthodox spellings, coinage, polysemy and ambiguities arising due to creative wordplay and flouting of the maxims of conversation. The interpretative strategies include plain statements with unexpected elaboration, exaggeration and overextension of proposals, counterfactual accounts of an event, repetition of the statements, straight questions and twisted answers, and incongruous linking between true statements.

“The language of humour ranges from the immediacy of bodily form and function, in all its sensory, sexual and scatological glory, to the sublime reaches of abstract thought.” Veale (2003: 1)

All these instances are contextual, but some are highly contextual, necessitating prior socio-cultural knowledge while others are relatively free. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Instances of verbal humour
i	Two persons talking: First person: Your face look familiar; I guess I have seen it somewhere. Second person: Impossible, I swear my face has always been on my neck and between two ears.
ii	Monogamy leaves a lot to be desired. Source: Blake (2007: 4)
iii	Husband greets happy birthday to his wife and asks her wish. Wife: I wish to see the entire world. The husband brings a map and says: Here is the map, see the entire world.
iv	Software techie: I cannot print. Every time I try, it says, “Cannot find printer.” I even lifted it and kept it in front of the monitor.
	Whenever I fill out an application, in the part that says “If an

v	emergency, notify:” I put “DOCTOR”. What is my mother going to do?
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Table 4.1: Instances of verbal humour

Instances of verbal humour such as spontaneous jokes, puns, riddles, wits, wordplays, etc., should have become the serious concern for Linguistics. However, this did not happen in any tradition pursuing Language Sciences anywhere in the world. A linguistic study of verbal humour should look at the humorous properties of the text available in spoken, written and gestural modalities. Apparently, it should investigate what makes a verbal humour humorous/funny. It should find out if humour lies in the linguistic utterance itself, or it is in the relative contexts of interpretation or does the interlocutor select the humorous meaning. Another task pertinent to the linguists involving in Humour Studies would be the rating of the humorous texts on funniness. Arguably, not all texts are equally humorous. If the structure has a role in humour generation, linguists studying verbal humour should investigate the structures that are more likely to be humorous. It is also important to note that not all humorous texts exhibit the same levels of difficulty in reading. Some instances of humorous texts are more readable than the rest. A linguistic analysis should find out how difficulty levels of the texts may affect the experience of funniness among the readers. However, the most important task for the linguistic analysis of verbal humour is to identify and explicate alterations/manipulations in language use towards humorous effects.

This chapter discusses the structural build-up of verbal humour. Its primary objective is to explicate that language use including lexical and structural manipulations is an essential ingredient in humorous phenomena. It first discusses the significance of language in the construction of verbal humour. Next, it argues for the recognition of verbal humour as a genre. After that, it presents some issues relevant to the traditional and modern classifications of verbal humour. It offers a reclassification of the phenomena and proposes that all instances of humour may fall under the macroscopic and microscopic classes. Later, it explicates the working of each class with suitable examples. It analyses the use of language in diverse forms of verbal humour. It is important to note that the verbal humour making into the example sets of this chapter have occurred in typologically different languages that form a linguistic area as they exist within a definable geographical and political entity. The motivation for including verbal humour from various typologically heterogeneous languages is to identify and validate certain linguistic structures and cognitive features that are visible in humour across languages and cultures. The final section of this chapter looks into the issue of readability of verbal humour. It presents a comparative analysis of readability of the sub-classes identified in this chapter as forms of verbal humour.

4.2. The genre, sub-genres and classification of verbal humour

Concerning definition of humour, Sully (1902: 297) highlights the fact that there is hardly a word that is as familiar and at the same time as difficult as humour to define. The term *genre* usually signifies a kind of literary work, a style of writing or a class of art form. By all parameters, verbal humour qualifies as a genre. However, there is little or no recognition of it as a genre in art and literature. Surprisingly, it has served as a sub-class of comedy. This kind of non-recognition and reductive approach has prevented the research community from experiencing the magnanimity of verbal humour and its diverse

nature. Undoubtedly, its recognition as a genre would open up new vistas of research and contribute to the study of performance arts, literature, discourse analysis, human psychology, linguistics and inter-culture pragmatics. The present work not only pitches for the recognition of verbal humour as a genre that is complete in its own right, but it also treats verbal humour as a genre and its diverse manifestations as sub-genres. The main purpose of this kind of treatment is to draw the attention of the researchers towards systematic classifications and analyses of this multifarious phenomenon. After observing a range of phenomena that may link together as components of verbal humour, this chapter will demonstrate how alterations at various microscopic levels infuse amusement in a particular instance of verbal humour.

4.3. Schemes of classification of verbal humour

Considering the dynamic nature of verbal humour numerous classification schemes are possible, and several schemes have indeed already emerged. Some of them focus on the structure and substance of verbal humour, some concentrate on the socio-cultural functions of it, and some focus on the psychological aspects of it. This section looks at three broad classifications and presents them as pairs of antonymous categories. However, before moving into the classifications it is important to understand why to categorise and classify instances of humour.

Categories play an important role in human cognitive behaviour. This section looks at the humour category interface. At first, it discusses the relevance of categories from the perspectives of cognitive linguistics. Then it examines the implicit phenomenon of humour categorisation. Following that, it concentrates on how categorisation facilitates the stacking and recall of humour in everyday language use. Categorisation is a natural instinct. Human beings have evolved to utilise this cognitive attribute in innumerable ways. When they encounter humorous stimuli, this aspect immediately comes into play. When a person experiences a joke, s/he immediately identifies the joke as an instance of the particular category of joke for instance ethnic humour, sexual humour, political jokes, kids' jokes, etc. This categorisation also helps in humour recall besides establishing connections between the joke and an entirely new situation. This aspect of humour necessitates classification of humour into various types and sub-types. Earlier scholars have classified humour into the following four categories:

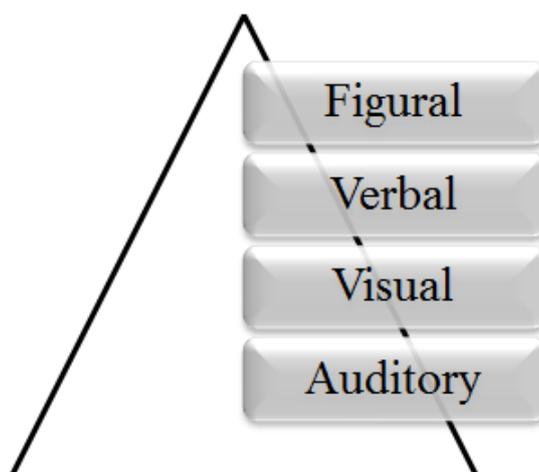


Illustration 4.1: Classification of humour

A problem in their classification is that apart from terming a set of humour phenomena as verbal they have not discussed the role of language in the architectural marvellous of humour. In the context of the present research verbal humour is in itself a magnanimous category offering numerous sub-types. Drawing from the interdependence among them, Khan (2010a) lowers the grouping of humour to two namely verbal and non-verbal. Concerning verbal humour the research literature have mainly identified canned and conversational humour as its sub-types (Attardo 1994). Apparently, there is no discussion that verbal humour may stand out as a broad category that may include numerous humorous phenomena. Barring Dynel (2009) humour researchers have mostly confined their classification either to the broad categories of canned and conversational humour or they have clubbed everything as forms of the joke.

The main argument of the present chapter and this section is that verbal humour is a broad category and the research on it may advance from various angles. The term canned and conversational may apply to verbal humour concerning their origin and proliferation. If a certain instantiation or its structure has existed for long or is part of the common knowledge, it is canned. Contrastively, if the instantiation is spontaneous, it is conversational. However, the parameter is not so strict. It is important to consider the following illustration before the discussion can advance to the next stage.

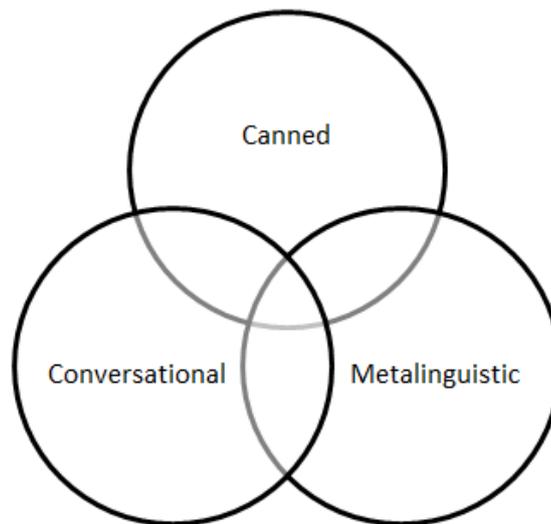


Illustration 4.2: Sources of verbal humour

The pair of canned or conversational humour basically relates to the status of the instantiation as old or new. This form of categorization does not take into account the linguistic aspects. Arguably, this classification does not have a strong social or psychological basis. In addition, it completely leaves out the metalinguistic humour. It is important to consider the metalinguistic verbal humour as a category.

The above illustration exhibits how the three categories interact with each other. However, the present work finds it more convenient to treat the above categories as launch pads or points of origin for verbal humour. Accordingly, verbal humour is a set comprising of various kinds of humour. Most significantly, the members of this may have canned, conversational and metalinguistic sources of origin.

Here, it is important to examine the classification of verbal humour from various standpoints. For obvious reasons, this section presents the classifications in the form of following dichotomous pairs.

- a) Linguistic versus conceptual classifications
- b) The linguistic versus socio-cultural classifications
- c) Macroscopic versus microscopic classifications

The above pairs are for the sake of convenience in organising the diverse data, and they are not rigid. Elements belonging to one category may simultaneously belong to the other category as well. A logical explanation for this division of classifications is that it offers easily identifiable groups of humorous instantiations. Following that, it also becomes easy to compare among and between the members of these groups.

4.3.1. Linguistic versus conceptual

Here, the linguistic classification refers to the use/manipulation of various aspects of language, such as sounds, words, sentences etc., to achieve humorous effects. Whereas, the conceptual classification refers to cognitive devices such as satire, irony, delay, subversion, exaggeration, counterfactual thinking, fantasy, etc. Yus (2012) classifies jokes according to how the humourist draws the linguistic, inferential and contextual information. An important argument of his (2012) study is that in an utterance every component has the potential to generate humorous experience.

“Rather trivially, the proportion of linguistic jokes will be larger if we adopt a more liberal view of linguistics. In particular, the number of jokes categorized as linguistic will depend heavily on whether we treat the realm of meaning – or how much of it – as linguistic.” Lew (1996: 9)

Lew’s argument is quite relevant in the context of meaning in humour. He leaves the issue of meaning open to alteration and thereby creates the scope for confrontation. The present work takes a rather liberal view of this issue as it considers meaning an all-important phenomenon. Arguably, verbal humour naturally comes under the academic scope of semantics and pragmatics. As Goatly puts it

“Anyone interested in semantics and pragmatics, the way meanings are coded in language and produced or interpreted in context, notices that jokes exemplify various kinds of ambiguity or risk to meaning.” (Goatly 2012: 1)

Though Goatly’s focus is on jokes his argument is relevant to the larger category of verbal humour and its superset humour itself. The risk to meaning may act as an important source of humour. Goatly’s idea is in need for a tweak as the meaning is not under risk always. More often than not the meaning multiplies and the resultant meanings are relevant.

4.3.2. Linguistic versus socio-cultural

The linguistic category comprises verbal humour that heavily depends on language manipulations. This category of verbal humour operates at all the following levels: Graphemic, Phonological, Morphological, Syntactic, Semantic, Pragmatic, Discoursal. Whereas, the socio-cultural category comprises of verbal humour that operates at following levels: society-culture, ethnicity, religion, workplace and politics. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Instances of verbal humour
i	A doctor falls in love with the nurse. He expressed his love in writing. His letter read “I Love You Sister”
ii	One tourist asked an innocent villager: “Any great men born in this village?” The villager replied: “No great men, only small babies are born here.”
iii	Looking at a most wanted poster Sardar thought. dʒəb vʌntəd t̪hɑ̃ t̪o pʰoʈo kʰiʈfne ke baɖ dʒəne kjũ d̪iʒɑ (If he was wanted, why did they let him go after taking photo).
iv	Santa bought a lottery ticket for five rupees that was worth rupees fifty thousand. The next day when the draw came, Santa’s name appeared as the winner. When Santa went to collect his money the officials offered him rupees ten thousand and said the remaining amount he can collect in four instalments. Santa did not like this and said, “Return me my five rupees and keep your lottery.”
v	Santa wanted to play a prank on Banta. He invited him for lunch. When Banta arrived at his house, he saw a lock with a note saying “ <i>how foolish of you to come for the lunch.</i> ” Banta wrote back “ <i>I never came here.</i> ”

Table 4.2: Instances of verbal humour

4.3.3. New schemes of classification of verbal humour

Macroscopic scheme

This scheme comprises the larger categories such as puns, jokes, riddles, one-liners, stories, etc. The macroscopic scheme assembles together the diverse identities in which verbal humour exists. The present description includes puns, jokes, one-liners, counterfactual headlines, riddles, shaggy stories, etc. however, the actual list may be much longer. For the purpose of simplicity, this chapter regards this classification as the classification on a conceptual basis. Apparently, most elements of the microscopic classification would fit in a particular sub-type of this category.

Microscopic scheme

This scheme picks up instances of the above category and rearranges them according to the kind of creative manipulations in them. For the purpose of simplicity, this chapter regards this classification as a classification by language use. Accordingly, the various instantiations may embody one or two from the following:

- a) Letters, spellings at the level of orthography.
- b) Mispronunciation and mishearing at the level of phonology
- c) Polysemy, homonymy etc. at the level of semantics
- d) Ambiguity and a duality of interpretation at the level of syntax
- e) Under-specification, Flouting/ violation of conversational maxims, hyper-understanding and misunderstanding at the level of pragmatics.

- f) Definitions, blends, abbreviations and acronyms at the level of lexicology.
- g) Semantic miscue, creative language use, wordplays and
- h) Inverted question forms, puns and riddles at the level of discourse.

The next section presents various components of the macroscopic scheme of classification.

4.4. Macroscopic scheme and the diverse identities of verbal humour

The instances of verbal humour simultaneously embody many identities. Therefore, instances of verbal humour that serve as members of a particular class fit in other groups also. What is notable in their multiple and diverse identity is that they have an inherent structure.ⁱ

Every instance of verbal humour has an internal structure that is to say that puns, jokes, tongue twisters, riddles, etc. are amusing because they embody an internal structure. Alterations in the internal/inherent structure would affect the degree of funniness in them and thereby alter their class too.

Funniness is the defining feature of humour. Arguably, a definition of humour is incomplete if it does not include funniness in it. Despite having origins and affiliations in diverse streams of thought, the humour theories too cannot afford to exclude funniness. Perceivably, funniness emerged as the criterion for a piece of humour; greater the funniness in it, higher the ratings it gets.

These above aspects may seem to appear at distinct points of a continuum, but they are integral to humour studies. Consequently, the internal structure, the response they evoke and their theoretical interpretations constitute the basis of most research on jokes.

4.4.1. Jokes

Jokes are the most easily identifiable form of verbal humour. They are everywhere, so frequently occurring in day-to-day conversations that often laymen and scholars treat the terms jokes and verbal humour or even humour as coterminous. This may explain why jokes have always dominated scholarly works on humour. A comparative analysis may reveal that the academic engagement on jokes outnumbers all other forms of verbal humour put together. Arguably, the term humour and verbal humour are relatively new in research. However, their sub-classes have existed for long. Still they have not been able to draw as much attention as jokes have done. According to Kuipers (2015), jokes form such a genre that no group tries to contest or associate with. Lew (1996) has focused on the ambiguity based verbal jokes and attempted to trace out the rules that might also be governing the special genre of verbal humour.

The present research observes that all theories of humour have based their findings on jokes first, and only a few have gone beyond jokes. A possible explanation could be that structurally jokes offer themselves as it is easier to split a joke into set-up and incongruity or set-up, surprise and disambiguation. In addition, it is easier in jokes to examine the cognitive factors than in the other forms. Therefore, jokes also serve as the parametric scale for theoretical findings on other forms verbal humour. Needless to say, jokes show a close resemblance to short stories concerning narrative and textual aspects. Therefore, it is important to consider jokes in any study on the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour. A vital point concerning the relay or broadcast of jokes

that person who writes a joke wants the readers to read it or the person who is narrating it seeks an audience. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Jokes
i	While arguing their cases two lawyers enter into personal attacks One says; I have never seen an idiot like you before. The other replies; But you are a bigger idiot than I am. The judge intervenes; Order! Order! Do not forget that I am present here.
ii	Air hostess: Dear passengers, we have a very good news and a very bad news for you. The good news is that we are going to land soon and the weather outside is excellent. And, the bad news is that we are lost and do not know where we are landing. <p style="text-align: right;">Adapted from Woolard (1999: 2)</p>
iii	Question: What do you give a person who has everything? Answer: Antibiotics <p style="text-align: right;">Source: Carr & Greeves (2006: 35)</p>
iv	Santa to police: mudʒ ^h e fon pe dʒan se mārne ki ɖ ^h əmki mil rəhi hɛ. (I am receiving life threats over phone). Police: kən hɛ vəh? (Who is it threatening you?) Santa: BSNL ke staff. (The staff members of BSNL) Police: I can't believe this! Santa: kəhɽe hɛ̃ pɛsa ɖo vərna kaɽ ɖɛge. (They say pay money, otherwise we will terminate).
v	Psychiatrist's secretary: There's a man in the waiting room who claims to be invisible. Psychiatrist: Tell him I can't see him right now.

Table 4.3: Jokes

Apparently, the example 4.3 contains instances of verbal humour, specifically jokes. It is easy to notice that jokes have a structure that is similar to a short story. In their organisation, jokes have a set-up, which conceals the information that would appear later. The set-up misleads or delimits the readers thinking so that later revelation of the punchline succeeds in causing amusement and laughter. Structure, the above instances show that there are well-calculated violations of the rules of language.

“Violation of a rule of language results in one or other kind of incongruity, and incongruity is often amusing.” (Shultz and Robillard 1980: 71)

An important fact concerning jokes is that it is such a genre or sub-genre that is most likely to be judged for appropriateness. The judging involving appropriateness of jokes is not merely an individual preference. Kuipers (2015) observes that joke is a form of humour and recognises it as a genre about which the scholars' opinions are not identical. She considers the judgement about the suitability of jokes a product of various socio-cultural factors. She also claims that the difference between a good humour and a bad humour varies from group to group, from context to context and from person to person.

4.4.2. Puns

The pun is a sub-genre of verbal humour that involves ambiguous constructions. Different scholars have accorded different etymological origins of the term. According to Culler (1988: 2), it is okay for the word pun to ‘be of uncertain origin and provoke etymological speculation.’

Puns are important in the context of the present research because puns involve language play, they are amusing, and they arouse laughter. For instance, consider the following statement: *Remark is something that you can hear and catch but can never see who it is.*

Structurally and conceptually, puns are very much like riddles and conundrums. For instance, a question like *which is the laziest mountain in the world*, will have *Mount Everest* as its answer, because if the name Everest splits the result would be ever – rest. Consider more instances of it in the following example:

Sl. No.	Trigger	Target
i	In the word GLOVES what is the relationship between the letters G and S.	They have love in between.
ii	It is a three letter word. If you read from left to right it refers to the bread seeker. If you read it from right to left it refers to the bread giver.	DOG
iii	How can two and two make more than four?	If they are put in linear order two and two would make twenty two.
iv	I am a four-letter monosyllabic word. You can see me neither in the morning nor in the evening. Who am I?	Noon
v	Is it okay to write on a full stomach or an empty stomach?	Neither, it better to write on a paper.
vi	I am twice in coffee, once in tea but never in milk. Who am I?	The letter ‘e’
vii	A word whose first part means equal, the second means inferior and together they mean superior. What is it?	MATCHLESS. Match + Less = Matchless.
viii	Why is the letter B always so cool?	Because it lies in between A and C
ix	What does not ask questions but must be answered?	Telephone
x	Why is the letter G never short?	Because it come at the end of long.

Table 4.4a: Puns

Again, consider the following with descriptions:

Sl. No.	Trigger	Target
i	In a cup there was some butter. U came out and I came in. What happened then?	The butter became bitter.
ii	How would you add one to ten and still get nine as result?	$I + X = IX$
iii	How many letters are there in Alphabet?	Eight.
iv	What is it that starts with tea and ends with tea?	Tea pot
v	Name the letter of the English alphabet that keeps us waiting.	Q
vi	Name the month in which people sleep less than any other month.	February
vii	What is common between a tick and a stick?	Both are used by the teachers.
viii	Which musical instrument do we carry all the time?	Eardrums
ix	How many seconds are there in a year?	Twelve
x	Name the person who shaves more than ten times a day.	Barber

Table 4.4b: Puns

Descriptions:

In one, the letters U and I make the reader believe that they refer to the pronouns 'you' and 'I' but they actually refer to the swapping of the letter 'u' with 'i' in the word butter to make it bitter.

In two, the Roman numerals I and X referring to one and ten respectively add up orthographically and the result nine is not their sum but their linear representation.

In three, the word 'letters' refers to the letters present in the word alphabet, not the twenty-six letters of the Roman alphabet. The word alphabet in this context does not relate to the set of a Roman letter as present in the English alphabet.

In four, the word TEAPOT starts with the letter 't' and ends with it too. In addition, the concept that it refers to also starts with tea and ends with the same.

In five, the seventeenth letter of the Roman alphabet 'Q' stands for the word 'queue'.

In six, the month February has only twenty-eight or twenty-nine days. All other months would have either thirty or thirty-one days. Therefore, people get less sleep during this month.

In seven, the word tick stands for the tick mark that symbolises a correct answer while the word stick represents an instrument that teachers use punishing the pupils.

In eight, the second part of the word EARDRUM refers to a musical instrument.

In nine, the word 'second' refers to the ordinal number 'second'. In this context, it does not refer to the smallest unit of time. Accordingly, the word second comes twelve times, on 2nd January, 2nd February and so on.

In ten, the set-up does not specify whether he is shaving himself or others. Therefore, the readers get into thinking that shaving is happening to the same person. The

conventional wisdom that a person does not need to shave even twice a day contradicts with the possibility that it could be happening to different individuals by the barber, somebody whose profession is to shave.

4.4.3. Riddles and conundrums

Riddles and conundrums are available across languages and cultures. Scholars in Folklore, Culture Studies and Social Anthropology have described their presence in interactions as an important means to understand socio-cultural beliefs, norms and practices. Considering their nature, it seems appropriate to regard riddles and conundrums as natural elements for a collaborative study of Linguistics and Verbal Humour. However, riddles and conundrums have mostly fallen outside the purview of linguistic research. *The language of riddles* by Pepicello and Green (1984) and *A linguistic look at riddles* by Dienhart (1998) present an exception to the prevalent trend. Pepicello and Green (1984) is a full-length book while Dienhart (1998) is a research article that examines riddles and conundrums from the linguistic point of view. According to Green & Pepicello (1979), the riddle is a humorous expression that has the following features:

- a) Based on question-answer format
- b) Potentially solvable from the information included in the question
- c) Solvable by virtue of participation in a cultural system
- d) Placed in a conventional locus within a particular tradition in a performance context.

Now, consider the following:

What is the difference between an orange and an apple?

The colour of an orange is orange, but the colour of an apple is not apple.

Generally, the comparison of fruits would focus on how they taste. This example creates amusement through altering the usual basis for comparison by taking the colour and ignoring the taste or other nutrition-related properties of the two fruits in comparison.

Construct a sentence having all the names of days of the week.

Sunday went to Monday to meet Tuesday and ask Wednesday if Thursday had informed Friday that Saturday is a pleasant day.

In the above example, the recursive property of the human language is at the display. This sentence is most unlikely to occur in usual interactions. However, the natural languages permit such constructions. Grammatically and semantically the above sentence is perfect though very unlikely to occur in true conversations.

Two mothers and two daughters went to watch a football match. There were only three seats available in the stadium. Still each of them sat on single seats. How was that possible?

There were only three women, who sat on the three seats available.

The set-up makes the reader believe that there were four women. Instead, there were only three. The two mothers represented a mother and a grandmother who is mother's mother while the two daughters represented a daughter and a granddaughter who is daughter to the daughter. So, three of them sat on the three seats available.

According to Dienhart (1998: 95), "riddles are part of human culture" bearing linguistic triggers. Riddles and conundrums are what they are because of language manipulations in them. Structurally, they may appear in the form of questions or rhyming

stanzas and conceptually often, the speakers announce that s/he is going to throw a riddle. Even when the speakers do not announce the intention, the listeners are able to predict riddles by their nature itself. In all cases, they have a linguistic trigger and a conceptual target. Some notable points concerning the nature and behaviour of riddles including conundrums are as following:

- a) they involve indirect references and ambiguous structures
- b) they involve figurative use through metaphors and metonymy
- c) they involve coherence, brevity and concealment of information
- d) they are predictable
- e) they are interesting and cause amusement

Considering the above points, the present research treats riddles and conundrums as sub-genres of verbal humour. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Trigger	Target
i	What is that has mouth but does not eat, runs but does have feet?	The river
ii	What is the beginning of eternity, the end of time and space, the beginning of every end and the end of every race?	The letter 'e'
iii	Guess the word that has five syllables and if you remove the first syllable and no syllable remains.	Monosyllable.
iv	The word ENEMY has five letter how would you spell it in three?	NME.
v	What part of London is in France?	N
vi	Name the city that can give you a shock.	Electricity
vii	Name two words that have no vowel.	Try & rhythm.
viii	How many sides can a bottle have?	Two sides: Inside and outside.
ix	What has cities but no houses, river and seas but no water and forests but no trees.	A map.
x	What is it that can take knocks all day but never cries?	The door.

Table 4.5a: Riddles and Conundrums

Descriptions:

In one, the concept of a river has a metaphoric extension. In general, it is common to personalise the river. Therefore, rivers have the mouth but they do not eat and run without feet.

In two, the set-up looks like concerning with some philosophical issue, but the disambiguation strategy reveals that the concepts raised at the set-up stage existed only at the level of spelling.

In three, if you drop [mo] from the word monosyllable [nosyllable] remains.

In four, the funniness lies in the spelling out by individual letters as they sound, making into the word.

In five, London and France are simply words. They do not refer to place names. Therefore, 'n' is the only common letter between the words London and France.

In six, the set-up takes a part of the word Electricity and uses it for the function it performs.

In seven, the intended words are anything from the following: TRY, FRY, CRY, MY, etc. It is not possible to have a word without a vowel but the term vowel here refers to the vowel letters, not the vowel sounds.

In eight, the amusement arises from the function and relevance of the sides not the sides as possible dimensions.

In nine, the ambiguity arises due to the clever manipulation of mention-use distinction.

In ten, the concept of the door comes in the personified form.

Riddles and conundrums may also appear in the form of instruction, task and rhyming stanza. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Trigger	Target
i	Construct a sentence using the word 'because' three-times coming together.	A sentence cannot end with because, because 'because' is a conjunction.
ii	I assist reading as well as writing, but I am neither pen nor paper. Who am I?	A pen
iii	Why a toothbrush is not named teethbrush since it cleans our teeth.	Because the plural of human is not humen.
iv	kəwə udʒə hæ akəʃ mē məgər rəʃtə hæ kəhə ? (The crow flies in the sky but where does it/crocodile live)?	Water
v	ʃɪtər ke dʒo əge ʃɪtər (Two birds ahead of a bird) ʃɪtər ke dʒo piːhɪ ʃɪtər (Two birds behind a bird) əge ʃɪtər – piːhɪ ʃɪtər (Ahead birds – behind birds) kʌl mɪlə ke kɪtne ʃɪtər (Altogether, how many birds?)	Three

Table 4.5b: Riddles and Conundrums

The question-answer and rhyming stanzas are most prevalent forms for the relay of riddles and conundrums; however, it is important to note that such forms are non-essential. In addition, it is not always necessary for a riddle or conundrum to be humorous. The present research concerns the ones that are humorous and considers them as sub-genres of verbal humour because they utilise the same architectural and conceptual intricacies, follow the patterns same as puns, satires and one-liners, and are mostly humorous.

How can you make a singer sing?

Just remove the final syllable 'ər' singer becomes sing.

Here, the set-up misleads the reader into thinking that the word sing would refer to the action of singing. Therefore, the reader would start thinking about some persuasive

strategy whereas the punchline is the revelation that the word sing actually referred to the lexeme, not the word.

What is the difference between a slow train and a superfast train?

The slow train stops at all stations,

however, the superfast stops in between stations.

This example satirises the fact about the running of the trains in India. In the Indian context, the slow (or local) trains cover shorter distances than the superfast trains. By policy, they have to stop at most stations. The superfast trains stop only at important junctions, they do not stop at all stations. However, if the platform is not free when they approach a railway station they have to stop and wait for some time. This wait is not at a minor station, rather is often between two stations.

There is a clock that takes two seconds to ring at two o' clock.

So, how much time should it take to ring at four o' clock?

Four seconds to ring four times.

This instance is an exciting play of context-free and contextual use of numbers. The information in the set up would lead one to assume that the ringing at four would take place after a couple of hours. Naturally, the reply would be two hours or one hundred and twenty minutes. However, the answer surprises the readers by informing them that the time duration in this context refers to the duration of the ring and not the waiting time for the ring.

4.4.4. Funny one-liners and counterfactual headlines

Funny one-liners and counterfactual headlines represent the sub-genre of verbal humour that succeeds due to creative manipulation of language. They embody wits and wisdom and employ the tactics of coercive reinterpretation. Dynel (2009: 1291) considers quotations as popular culture artefacts. The use of humour in the form of funny one-liners has spread to various aspects of life. For instance, text messages, status updates on social networks, event taglines, political slogans, brand advertising and t-shirt quotes just to name a few. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	One-liners, tag lines, quotes and witticism
i	Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
ii	Laugh at your problems, everybody else does the same.
iii	My opinions may have changed, but not the fact that I am right.
iv	Some cause happiness wherever they go. Others whenever they go.
v	Try a little kindness. As little as possible.
vi	If the speed of light is 186,000 miles/sec., what is the speed of darkness?

Table 4.6: One liners

The headline constitutes the most salient aspect of news items, and therefore news headlines have emerged as a genre in their right. Probably due to this, news headlines have often attracted the academic focus of the linguistic research especially in the sub-fields like Discourse and Pragmatics. However, the headlines of counterfactual news items have never received the attention they deserve. The fake headlines and counterfactual news have set a new trend of language use in the virtual media and the

digital world. They have emerged as a trending genre. Though the phenomenon is new, it has a formidable presence on the World Wide Web. From academic as well as non-academic standpoints, the resemblance between the real and the fake headlines is so much that it will not be easy to distinguish between them without using a truth table. However, from the linguistic and cognitive viewpoints, they embody striking dissimilarities. The unobvious objectives of fake headlines and the mechanisms by which these headlines achieve their goals offer exciting research possibilities. It is evident in this discussion that the counterfactual headlines may emerge as an important issue in humour studies. They differ from the actual headlines, advertisements and funny one-liners. In addition, they often attempt to alter the public opinion on significant issues by the creative wordplays, language manipulations, pictorial metaphors and several other cognitive tools.

Arguably, using humour as a vehicle, these headlines try to enforce a reinterpretation of socio-political incidents and facts. Forced reinterpretation is an idea of academic significance within Humour Studies. The use of this term in the analysis of humour concerns the state of mind involved in drawing inferences. However, in this context, this term refers to a smart tool that is abstract and largely intractable. This study observes that these headlines adopt implicit but coercive ways to disseminate certain socio-political ideas.

News headlines work under a constrained medium, as they have to consider numerous factors such as brevity, emphasis and longevity of the texts. The governing agencies require them to contain all these special effects. Therefore, it is natural for them to deviate from the conventional representation of language use. The fake headlines have mostly existed on the digital and virtual platforms. They also experience constraints of a different kind. Though brevity and longevity are not pressing demands, these headlines need to be smart and articulate. Nevertheless, these conditions contribute to the (fake) headlines' linguistic and cognitive marvels of a certain desirable kind. This issue is inherently interdisciplinary, and one of the challenges associated with it is that of association. Where does it fit? Since it involves ~~manipulative~~ 'creative' use of language and context, it looks natural to place it in both Discourse and Pragmatics.

“Headline style has long been a subject of scrutiny within both media studies and discourse studies for its peculiarities in linguistic structure, its potential for framing, keying or priming of interpretations, its role in collecting attention and its implications for coercion.” Molek-Kozakowska (2014: 8)

However, the case of witty one-liners and fake headlines is unique. Even at the surface level, it requires language manipulation and counterfactual arguments to ensure the experience of funniness. Social Linguistics, including Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Pragmatics, has mostly ignored these aspects of humour and language use. As a result, studies on headlines prospered but humorous aspects of (fake) headlines did not see the same response.

“It is astonishing that a discipline like CDA, whose principal remit is after all to highlight and to challenge the discourse practices of powerful and interested groups, has not noticed how humour can be used as a tool of repression and ridicule by the powerful, or as a form of resistance by the less powerful, or as an instrument to help galvanize social bonds among the disenfranchised groups.” Simpson & Mayr (2010: 25)

From the perspective of research, this creates a double loss situation. A unique phenomenon like 'verbal humour' escapes the critical analysis. Additionally, the academic advancement of the disciplines such as Pragmatics, Discourse, Stylistics and

Media Studies may remain incomplete. These universal issues apart, numerous reasons make such a study pertinent. Consider the following:

- a) these fake headlines embody texts that are analyzable.
- b) they involve language manipulations at various levels.
- c) they bear little obvious and little-concealed agenda.
- d) they are able to draw thousands of viewers.
- e) they engage issues that are highly diverse and debatable.
- f) they offer insight into the way politics/parapolitics of slogans works.

These microcosmic reasons form the conceptual basis of this paper. Arguably, some of the above points are more salient than the rest. They do not work in isolation and point to research possibilities from several fields. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Counterfactual headlines
i	Passers-by leave a man dying on Delhi road assuming it as a social experiment.
ii	After self-driving car, Google working on developing self-slapping mosquito.
iii	How MDH Masala and Shilajit Gold capitalized on Suarez World Cup controversy.
iv	Case filed against a man with face similar to popular photo of Satyanarayan Bhagwan for drinking alcohol.
v	Seeing temptation for Maggi among boys, Axe to launch Maggi fragrance deo for girls.
vi	Lazy corrupt man still to remove his black money from Swiss bank.
vii	Book written by ex-member of Gabbar Singh gang reveals Gabbar had a girlfriend.
viii	IIT student concentrating hard on research in physics to finally get a banking job.
ix	Facebook to create a separate wall at each historical monument for Indians to write whatever they want.
x	To shed her image of a dumb girl, Alia Bhatt to play role of a Nobel Prize winner in her next movie.

Table 4.7: Counterfactual headlines¹¹

These online portals are Indian counterparts of The Onion, The Spoof, The Faux News, etc., which are very popular in Europe and America. In appearance, these websites resemble the actual media websites with classified sections such as national, international, sports, cinema, etc. These portals have dedicated logos and slogans in addition to the search buttons to track the posts, and their headlines cover all aspects of human life. They are interactive as they have an inbuilt imaginary conversation, and they permit live comments where viewers can actually participate. In their cognitive structures, the counterfactual headlines and funny one-liners resemble each other. Consider the following points that highlight their similarities:

- a) Concerning size of the text, both are short;
- b) Concerning nature of the text, both are entertaining.
- c) Concerning structural complexities, both are biclausal and straightforward.
- d) From psycholinguistic and pragmatic viewpoints, both evoke surprise and

ambiguous situations leading to humorous disambiguation.

- e) From CDA perspective, both are transferrable. Therefore, both exist as trademarks, slogans, catchphrases, celebrity statements and status on social networking sites.
- f) Both funny one-liners and the counterfactual headlines act as a feeder to each other.

The above points render them synonymous entities, and it becomes difficult to decide whether a statement fits as a funny one-liner or a fake headline. Therefore, it is equally important to understand their differences. The following table contrasts between the two phenomena:

Sl. No.	Funny one-liners	Counterfactual headlines
i	The funny one-liners are generic statements and speak about life.	Counterfactual headlines are statements on specific issues.
ii	They are usually suggestive and appeal to an individual's personal/collective experiences.	They are usually satirical and force an alternative interpretation using fictitious retelling.
iii	They require little background knowledge and their funniness depends on the interlocutors' lack of familiarity with the issue.	They require background knowledge and their funniness at large depends on the interlocutors' familiarity with the issue.
iv	The funniness and relevance of one-liners stay evergreen, i.e. to say they are ageless.	The humour and relevance of fake headlines tend to phase-out with time.
v	Funny one-liners can be self-defeating statements and may sound absurd.	Fake headlines are about persons other than the speaker and they often sound real.
vi	Funny one-liners are mostly anonymous. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain who said them first.	Fake headlines are projection of socio-political groups. By design, their authorships come out.
vii	They speak about humans in general and do not point to any individual.	They mostly target individuals/groups.
viii	Linguistically funny one-liners make use of the first person pronouns and self-reducing statements.	Fake headlines mostly use the third person pronouns and reported speech.
ix	In terms of reusability, funny one-liners have a very frequency across time-periods.	In terms of reusability, fake headlines have a very frequency of occurrence in a particular time-period.
x	Tendentiously one-liners make use of irony and satire as strategic tools.	Tendentiously counterfactual headlines The figures of speech and

Table 4.8: One-liners versus headlines

It is also important to differentiate the counterfactual headlines from other entertainment discourse like wits, jokes and slapsticks. Fake headlines differ from the conversational humour like jokes and other kinds of verbally expressed humour. In jokes, the punchline embodies the intended meaning and contributes to the experience of funniness. Fake headlines and counterfactual news have developed as a trend of language use in the new age media. In fact, they have evolved as genre of a kind.

Discussions concerning the linguistic and stylistic features of advertisements and news headlines are available in plenty in the research literature. A lot of them concern with the humorous aspects of these genres. One aspect that merits a special mention here is the KISS principle. The KISS principle became popular with Kelly Johnson, a US engineer in 1970s. The acronym KISS, then, stood for *Keep It Simple Stupid*. Later variants of the expression include *Keep It Short and Simple* or *Keep It Simple and Straightforward*. Since these headlines exist on the virtual platforms, they cannot afford to be complex. The language manipulation in these headlines include (re)spelling, argument mismatch, violation of the maxims of conversation, word play etc. They make a judicious use of lexical and syntactic ambiguities and coordinate well between text and images.

4.4.5. Articulatory slips and tongue twisters

The two major trends of the 20th century Linguistics include; (a) Formalist-Structuralist approaches for instance Generative Linguistics and (b) Computational Linguistics including Natural Language Processing and Machine Translation. The Generative Linguistics enterprise led by Noam Chomsky as well as Computational Linguistics Research did not find tongue twisters very exciting. While Chomsky emphasised on investigating (only the) grammatical strings the Computational linguists focussed on rules for parsing and generating grammatical strings. The over-emphasis to good and grammatical sentences and neglect to odds utterances like tongue twisters is more evident in Computational Linguistics than it is anywhere else. The reason for this claim is simple. It was possible for the programme-driven Machine Translation to generate regular and predictable errors that humans make in general interactions. However, the post-Chomskyan era dominated by Cognitivists found that in the most general sense, a slip represents a loss of voluntary control rather than a rule violation. The articulatory slips and experimental errors occur because of mismatch between physical and psychological aspects of language production. They offer considerable insights into the working of auditory self-monitoring and repair strategies of the phonological mind. Baars (1992: x) maintains that production slips have already started contributing to the ongoing debates on speech production. Deliberate slips and experimental twists of phonology resulting in tongue twisters are common in social interactions. While they pose serious articulatory challenge, the failure or success in doing so has humorous outcomes. This is how tongue twisters belong to the set of verbal humour. The failure to articulate the intended sounds and syllables in tongue twisters are production slips. According to Baars (1992), they are not synonymous with errors for the reason that there is nothing wrong with vocal apparatus or brain signals. Humour arising from inadvertent errors, failure to pronounce improbable sound combinations and difficulty in handling tongue twisters has social as well as psychological implications.

Consider the following Tongue Twisters (TT) from English:

Sl. No.	Tongue Twisters in English
i	She sells sea shells on the sea shore. The shells she sells are sea shells I am sure. So if she sells sea shells on the sea shore, I am sure the shells are sea shore shells.
ii	Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper. A peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper, where is the peck of pickled pepper that Peter Piper picked?
iii	How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood? As much wood as a woodchuck would chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood.
iv	A tree toad who lived up in a tree loved a she toad. He was two-toed tree toad but she was a three-toed toad. The two-toed toad tried to win the three toed she toad's heart.
v	Four fritters are half-cooked uncle. Four fritters are well-cooked. The well-cooked fritters are half-cooked uncle. The half-cooked fritters are well-cooked.

Table 4.9a: Tongue twisters in English

TT	Competing consonants	Competing vowels	Competing syllables
TT-i	/ʃ/ /z/ /s/ /l/	/e/ /ə/ /i:/ /ɔ:/	[ʃi] [si] [ʃɔ:]
TT-ii	/p/ /r/ /k/ /t/	/ə/ /e/ /i/ /i:/	[pi] [pi:] [pe]
TT-iii	/d/ /k/ /tʃ/ /w/	/ə/ /ʊ/ /ɪ/ /ʌ/	[tʃək] [wəd] [kəd]
TT-iv	/t/ /d/ /r/ /w/	/ə/ /oʊ/ /i:/ /i/	[toud] [tri:] [θri:]
TT-v	/k/ /t/ /r/ /f/	/ə/ /ʊ/ /ɪ/ /æ/	[kʊkt] [ər] [wel]

Table 4.9b: Competing segments and syllables

Consider the following tongue twisters from Hindi-Urdu:

Sl. No.	Tongue twisters	Description
i	k ^h əɾək sɪŋ ke k ^h əɾəkne se k ^h əɾəkɪ hē k ^h ɪɾkɪjā k ^h ɪɾkɪjō ke k ^h əɾəkne se k ^h əɾəkɪ hē k ^h əɾək sɪŋ	Alliteration of the consonants /k ^h / & /ɾ/
ii	tʃəndʊ ke tʃatʃa ne tʃəndʊ kɪ tʃatʃɪ ko tʃandɪ tʃək pe tʃandɪ rət mē tʃandɪ ke tʃəm:ətʃ se tʃətnɪ tʃətai	Alliteration of the consonants /tʃ/ & /d/
iii	kətʃ:a pəpət pək:a pək:a pəpət kətʃ:a	Alliteration of the consonants /k/ & /p/
iv	false ka fasla	Alliteration of the consonants /f/ & /s/
v	pɪɾəl ke pəɾɪle mē pəpɪɾa pɪla pɪla	Alliteration of the consonants /p/ & /ɾ/
vi	kətʃ ^h ūt ūtʃa, kətʃ ^h ūt kɪ pɪt ^h ūtʃɪ kətʃ ^h ūtʃɪ ūt kɪ pōtʃ ^h	Alliteration of the consonants /k/ & /tʃ/
vii	ɾola ram ɾala ɾol ke ɾel mē ɾul gəja	Alliteration of the

	ṭola hua ṭola ṭale ke ṭale hue ṭel mē ṭal gəja	consonants /ṭ/ & /l/
viii	tʃar kətʃɪ kətʃ:e tʃatʃa tʃar kətʃɪ pək:e pək:ɪ kətʃɪ kətʃ:e tʃatʃa kətʃ:ɪ kətʃɪ pək:e	Alliteration of the consonants /tʃ/ & /k/
ix	pəke peɾ pər pəka pəpɪṭa pəkɪa peɾ ja pək:a pəpɪṭa	Alliteration of the consonants /p/ & /k/
x	ləpək bəbəlɪja ləpək əb na ləpəkve ṭo ləpəkve kəb	Alliteration of the consonants /l/ & /p/

Table 4.9c: TT in Hindi-Urdu

The table below presents tongue twisters in other Indian languages such as Bangla, Telugu, Assamese, Tamil and Punjabi.

Language	Tongue twister	Description
Bangla	kolkəʃar kəkəlɪ kakake kohɪlo kaka kak keno kaka kore	Alliteration of the consonants /k/ & /l/
Bangla	pak ^h ɪ paka pepe k ^h ae	Alliteration of the consonants /p/ & /k/
Bangla	dʒole tʃon ṭadʒa ṭele tʃol ṭadʒa	Alliteration of the consonants /dʒ/ & /tʃ/
Telugu	premano preminʃina prema premakar preminʃina premano premaga premiṣṭonḍi	Alliteration use of the consonant cluster /pr/.
Telugu	nani ni nuni na nunani nenən:a na nune na nune ni nune ni nune	Alliteration of the consonants /n/
Assamese	bokul bagorise bobosa bonote butoli bilawngoi bola bogakoi bogoli bohulai bohise bolukat biyoli bela	Alliteration of the consonants /b/ & /g/
Tamil	kokku netta kokku, netta kokku itta mutta katta mutta	Alliteration of the consonants /k/, /m/ & /n/
Malayalam	maʃe maʃe maʃinʃe makən maʃajəl maʃu maʃinʃe makən maʃe ɪnə vɪlɪkku maʃe	Alliteration of the consonants /m/ & /ʃ/
Panjabi	ḍobba ṭoppu k ^h al ṭappe ṭop ḍobbe ṭoppoa	Alliteration of the consonants /ḍ/ & /p/
Panjabi	ḍəvɪḍər ḍɪ ḍaḍi ḍe ḍo ḍāḍ ḍok ^h ḍe ḍɪllɪ ḍe ḍokandər ḍəvɪḍər ḍɪ ḍaḍi ḍe ḍāḍḍ ḍi ḍəvɪ ḍe ḍɪḍḍe	Alliteration of the consonants /ḍ/.
Panjabi	ḍɪl ḍɪk ^h ɪɾa ḍok ^h ɪɾe nə sənḍa sənḍe sənḍe ḍok ^h ɪɾe ḍɪl ḍɪk ^h ɪɾa nu ḍok ^h ənḍa	Alliteration of the consonants /ḍ/.
Panjabi	koṭɪjo koṭɪjo koṭe karḍe. kaḍ kaḍ ke kijḍ. kaṭi kaṭi kaḍ kaḍ kaṭka koṭɪjā kolḍ k ^h e k ^h e lanḡḍe	Alliteration of the consonants /k/.

Table 4.9d: TT in other Indian languages

There are conflicting ideas with respect to explaining the pronunciation and repetition difficulties arising in tongue twisters. On the one hand, there are biomechanical

constraints, while on the other hand there are phonetic competitions between the speech sounds. In addition, the expectation for semantic contents also appears to be playing a role. It is difficult to accept a single factor as the primary cause behind hilarious and difficult behaviour of tongue twisters.

In sum, tongue twisters that represent clever sequencing of alliterative and assonance sounds are difficult to repeat quickly and correctly. For instance, *rækʃɪ ʃæktʃəlɪ ʃəʃək* is a small tongue twister that has the alliteration of /k/ and /ʃ/ sounds. It is not easy to pronounce this three-word tongue twister repeatedly in quick succession. The production slips of this kind, sometimes phonological and sometimes semantic in nature, are often excessively hilarious. Therefore, an investigation into the working of humorous tongue twisters offers valuable insights into production slips and the phonological and semantic aspects of the human mind. They appear trivial at the surface because they do not receive any intellectual recognition in in day-to-day interactions. However, they can actually illuminate the deep coordination at the levels of mental planning and vocal actions.

4.4.6. Visual-Verbal humour in comic strips and cartoons

Comic strips and cartoons offer very concise expressions on enormous issues as they operate on a number of socio-political stereotypes, common knowledge on the subject and collective aspirations of the people. Comics and cartoons usually employ visual strategies such as callouts in the form of speech balloons or rectangular boxes that integrate with the image in the background and the surface.

Together they result in the development of humour typical of comic strips and cartoons. The presence of cartoons in newspapers is a global phenomenon. The newspaper cartoons mostly depict political situations and sometimes present apolitical ones. However, their analysis over a period can lead to the understanding of the historical development of a nation or community. A significant way in which the comic strips and cartoons differ from sitcoms, stand-up comedies and conversational jokes is the lack of set-up phase. They assume that the target viewers would be aware of the issue.

What works for set-up in these instances of humour is an assumption that the canvass would present something humorous. The assumption that the target viewers would have the background information necessary for interpretation is an additional benefit to the cartoonist. It is important to note that the presence of non-human animate objects such as birds, animals and trees and their prototypical behaviour contribute significantly to the build-up of pictorial metaphors. Consider the following examples:

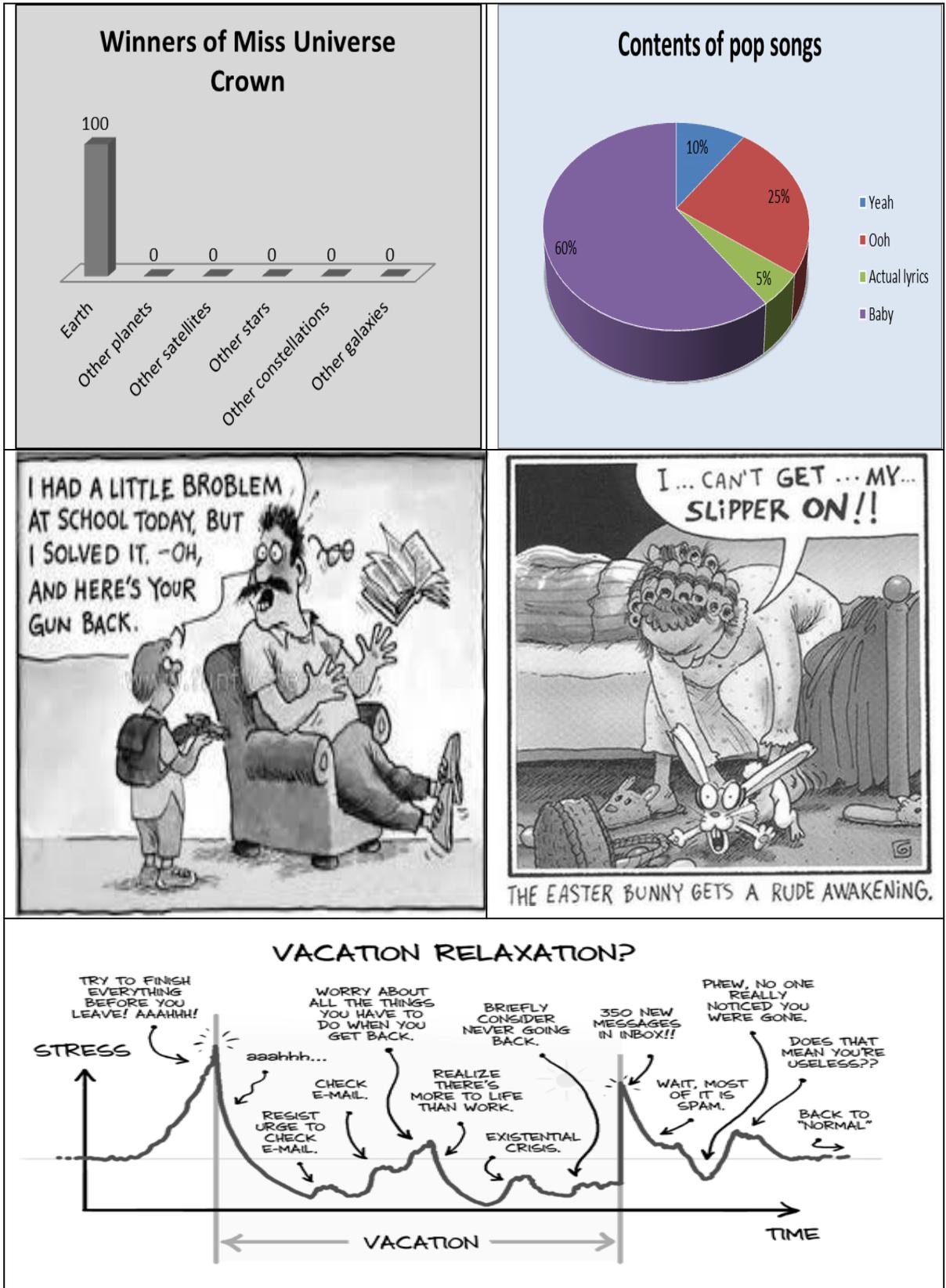


Table 4.10: Visual-Verbal humourⁱⁱⁱ

The category visual-verbal humour is the product of the present research. So far this category has not occurred in any research literature. Apparently, there are discussions

about multimodal humour. However, multimodal humour cannot occur on paper or in written form. In a way this kind of humour is a textual counterpart of multimodal humour. Needless to say this form of humour is highly enjoyable. The research community should take a note of this and initiate scholarly work on them because they can reveal how different modes like text and image together create humorous effects.

4.4.7. Para-jokes and joke-cycles

Joke cycles are para-jokes that mostly focus on an individual person/place/thing and the humour arises because the contributors of this kind of cycle typify, exaggerate or overextend certain behaviour adopted by the concerned. In jokes cycles such as Santa-Banta jokes, Panjabi jokes, Arab jokes, Polish jokes and Light Bulb jokes an impossible happens because of the typical aspects of the person, community, place or thing into consideration. Consider the following examples:

The Viola joke cycle: Viola is a musical instrument that looks like a bow and is slightly larger than a violin. The viola joke cycle typifies the instrument and its players. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Viola joke cycle
i	The violists constantly stand outside the houses because either they cannot get the key or they do not know when to enter.
ii	The violists are bad lovers because they do not know more than one posture.
ii	Gorilla and chimpanzee do not play viola because they are too intelligent to play a viola.
iv	The difference between a violist and a dog is that the dog stops scratching but the violist cannot.
v	Viola is not equal to money because you may like to turn down if a friend requests for your money but not if s/he requests for your viola.

Table 4.11a: Viola joke cycle^{iv}

Rajnikant joke cycle: Rajnikant is an extremely popular actor in Tamil cinema. He is the Indian version of *James Bond*. In most of his movies that won acclaim, he has performed actions that are impossible and unimaginable for normal humans. Drawing from his actions in movies his followers initiated this joke cycle and piled up hundreds of them. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Rajnikanth joke cycle
i	Rajnikanth never needs a watch, because he decides what time it is!
ii	Rajnikanth's keyboard does not have the Ctrl key because he is always in Control!
iii	When Osama got to know that Rajnikanth would help US find him, he shot himself to death!
iv	If a Dracula bites Rajnikanth, the Dracula becomes one of his followers!
v	The scariest ghosts set campfire and tell Rajnikanth stories to their

	children!
vi	Rajinikanth calls 100 to ask if everything is okay!
vii	Rajinikanth has been to Moon and Mars. That is why there are no signs of life there!
viii	Rajinikanth can indeed make onions cry!
ix	Rajinikanth is able to watch the Radio!
x	When Rajinikanth plays cricket, rain has to reschedule itself due to the match!

Table 4.11b: Rajinikanth joke cycle

Alok Nath joke cycle: Alok Nath is a Bollywood actor who typically performs the role of traditional Indian father. The fatherly and virtuous characters he has played in most of his movies made him the target of this joke cycle. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Aloknath joke cycle
i	When Alok Nath took birth; the doctors screamed, bəḍʰai ho, babudʒi hue hẽ (Congratulations, father is born.)
ii	Alok Nath is sãskari (cultured) because he smokes əgərbətti (incense sticks that burn near statues of god and goddess) instead of cigarette
iii	Alok Nath knows only two wars; pəriwar (family) and həriḍwar (Haridwar, a religious city).
iv	Alok Nath never received salary, he always receives pension.
v	Alok Nath carried Hanuman Chalisa (a holy text) to school instead of Notebooks.
vi	Alok Nath consumes prəfaḍ (the sweet distributed after prayer) as starter.
vii	Alok Nath strongly believes in əfirvaḍ (blessing) at First Sight'
viii	Alok Nath was the first person to address Parle as ParleG (a biscuit brand). Addressing somebody by suffixing his/her name with dʒi reflects an honorific behaviour and creates positive feelings.
ix	Alok Nath wants Facebook to add əfirvaḍ (blessing) button for status updates and posts.
x	Alok Nath watches only sãskar TV (a spiritual TV channel).

Table 4.11c: Alok Nath joke cycle

Ravindra Jadeja joke cycle: Ravindra Jadeja is a member of the Indian cricket team since. His gave extraordinary performance in a few matches. At first, his teammates wrote praise about him on Twitter (a popular microblogging website). However, later everyone including his teammates and the captain made him the butt of this joke cycle by tweeting and exaggerating his performances. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Ravindra Jadeja joke cycle
i	Setback for Modi: After lions, SC asks Gujarat to move Sir Jadeja to another state.
ii	It was not a no-ball; Sir Ravindra Jadeja moved the field back by 10 inches in his delivery stride.
iii	Sir Jadeja involved in all three dismissals. This is the definition of omnipresent.

iv	Sir Jadeja could have hit a six on the last ball and taken all the praise. But he was courteous enough to let RP Singh take all the limelight.
v	Apple named the iPhone voice recognition app as “Sir”i in honour of Sir Jadeja.
vi	Sir Jadeja took 1 wicket today and the IOC decided to reduce Petrol prices by Re 1 to honour him.
vii	Albie Morkel was scared. He refused to bowl in honour of Sir Jadeja.
viii	God realised Rajnikant is getting old so he created sir Ravindra Jadeja.
ix	Don’t be surprised if Sir Ravindra Jadeja wear half orange and half purple cap before he bowls or faces his 1st ball in this match.
x	And once again. The ball finds Sir Jadeja.

Table 4.11d: Ravindra Jadeja joke cycle

Alia Bhatt joke cycle: Alia Bhatt acts in Bollywood movies. She participated in a TV show named *Coffee with Karan* and became the butt of this joke cycle because she showed a lack of general knowledge about India. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Alia Bhatt joke cycle
i	Finally, Sonia Gandhi found a suitable match for her son Rahul Gandhi. Her wife would be Alia Bhatt
ii	Alia Bhatt reads newspaper; Police catches 80kg heroine. Alia Bhatt: Shit! Why did they catch Sonakshi Sinha?
iii	A new teacher asks a student; “Name one great Indian scientist” The boy answers; Alia Bhatt (Alia Bhatt is a Bollywood actress). The teacher feels very annoyed and scolds the boy: is this what you have learnt? Another boy intervenes and says; sir he wanted to say Arya Bhatt but since he cannot pronounce /r/ he said Alia Bhatt.

Table 4.11e: Alia Bhatt joke cycle

In the above joke cycle, the first one satirises the wisdom of Alia Bhatt and Rahul Gandhi while the second joke shows Alia Bhatt failing to understand the homonymous use of the word ‘heroine’. The swapping of /r/ and /l/ is common problem in children’s speech and often this becomes the source of funniness humour. The third joke exploits the same swapping to refer to two distinct professionals.

A notable point concerning the joke cycles is that they form a series. This series capitalises on a preceding event or statement. Background information is necessary to understand and appreciate these cycles.

4.4.8. Shaggy story

The term ‘shaggy story’ is applicable to such stories that are exceptionally displeasing and bad. They certainly create a feeling of disgust. However, the play of language in such stories resembles some forms of verbal humour. Consider the following example:

Once a stubborn baby vulture asked its dad "Papa I crave for the HUMAN FLESH, want to have human flesh." The vulture somehow managed to get

pork (pig's meat) for its baby. But the stubborn baby vulture refused to eat it and said "I want to eat human flesh." The vulture tried again but this time it got beef (cow's meat) for its baby. The baby vulture said its beef and refused to consume it. And, said "I want human flesh and nothing else." At this point, the vulture got a brilliant idea. The vulture went to a mosque and threw the pork (pig's meat) there. Again, it went to a temple and threw the beef (cow's meat) there. Just that!!! The following day, the streets were full of human corpses (dead bodies of humans). The vulture and its stubborn baby relished on the human flesh for weeks. They also organised a feast for their small vulture community. Curious about the instant flooding of human flesh, the baby vulture asked its dad "Papa how did you manage to get so much human flesh so quickly?" Source^v

It is noticeable in the above example that the author has personalised vultures and presented a horrible incident in such a way that is pitiable and laughable at the same time. These stories often call for an introspection of the social situations and reaffirm our belief in the humane aspects.

4.4.9. Banter, duelling, retort, and bullying

Banter is a form of collaborative interaction that contains light teasing. People involving in banter usually tease each other by jointly mocking and co-authoring fantasies. Causing humour or laughter is not the primary objective of banter or any retort within that. However, these instances are often very humorous because they exhibit racy exchanges of sarcasm, wit, fantasy, mock, ill-advising etc. The sequences of conversational turns in such interactions are increasingly aggressive and mutually sarcastic. An important characteristic of banter is 'quick retorts' by the individuals who take part in this kind of interactions. The exchanges in these quick retorts maintain a single theme and indirectness (Dyrel 2009). Duelling, retort, banter and bullying are instances of language use that typically involve impoliteness, face-threats, puzzlement, stereotyping, denigration, reduction and insults. They result from conflictual discussions and aim at exhibiting supremacy of one sex over the other(s), one religious faith over the others, one race over the others and one language over the others. Courtrooms debates and husband-wife conflicts are easy to see examples of such acts. Consider for instance, the discussions that take place following a political news item on the World Wide Web and the social media such as Facebook and Twitter. For instance, consider the following.

Girl: kəl mē rak^{hi} le kər aji t̪^{hi} pər t̪əmne nəhī bənd̪^hvaji

(Yesterday I had come with raakhi but you did not let me tie it)

Boy: kəl mē məŋgəl sət̪r le kər aŋga t̪o t̪əm bənd̪^hvaogi kja

If tomorrow I come with mangal sutra will you let me tie it?

In the above duel, the girl complains the boy of not allowing her to tie *raakhi* on to his hand. Rakhi is a thread that symbolizes wishes for safety and wellness. However, in practice mostly, sisters tie it onto boys who they consider their brother inside as well as outside the family. Marriage is very unlikely to happen between a boy and girl who relate through raakhi (the protecting thread). The boy's response is on a similar logic. He asks the girls if she would allow him to tie *mangal sutra* if he brings one. Mangal sutra is a thread, usually in the form of a necklace that the husband ties to the neck of his wife at the time of marriage. The donning of mangal sutra symbolises the married status for a woman. In the above joke, the boy and the girl confront with each other symbolically.

The girl initiates the interaction on a complaining note while the boy ducks it in a similar way. The instances of banter, retort, bullying and duelling need not have two turns of conversation like the above joke. They can also succeed with a single turn of conversation. Consider the following:

I really appreciate your brain. It is divisible into two parts: Left and Right.

In the right nothing is left and in the left nothing is right.

In the above the divisibility of human brain, in particular the cerebral region into left and right hemispheres is a fact. However, in the clauses ‘nothing is left’ and ‘nothing is right’ the words left and right do not correspond to spatial information. Rather, they correspond to absence of substance and malfunctioning respectively. The above instance of verbal humour rests on the homophonous use of the words left and right.

In last one and half decades the virtual world comprising of mobile and cyber communication has rendered duelling, banter and bullying a new platform to prosper. Normatively, these speech acts should not qualify as examples of verbal humour. However, some aspects especially those concerning language use and cognitive effects in them qualify them as legitimate members of the set of verbal humour. It is important to note that they may not correspond to real life social interactions and are prevalent only in the imaginary realms. However, their existence in the virtual and imaginary realms creates scope for interactions and exchange that would otherwise be impossible. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Instances of banter and bullying
i	Husband asks do you know the actual meaning of WIFE? It means 'Without Information Fighting Everywhere' Wife: No it means 'With Idiot For Ever'
ii	Husband: You know our son got his brain from me? Wife: I too think he did. Because mine is still with me.
iii	Dad: You must get 80% marks in the public exam Son: Don't worry dad I'll get 100% in all papers Dad: Don't joke Son: You started first.
iv	One boy wrote an SMS letter to his dad: “No Money No Fun Your Son.” The father replied: “So Sad Very Bad Your Dad.”
v	Teacher: To keep your character good consider every girl as your sister Student: But will it not dent my father's character.

Table 4.12: Banter and bullying

4.4.9.1. Duels and retorts

Duels and retorts are common instances of language use that involves two parties. The two parties compete against each other. In these conversations, one party uses clever remarks with an intention of undermining the reputation of the other party. To this provocative gesture, the other party either tries to safeguard itself or returns a higher degree of insult. Though they do not employ abusive terminologies, the actual instantiations are nothing less than that in impact. The remarkable aspect of the instances is that there are two layers of meaning and one of them is satirical. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Instances of duels and retorts
i	A: Fashion today goes towards tiny. B: So, you have got the most fashionable brain. Source: Dynel (2009: 1293)
ii	A: Why are you drinking alcohol? B: What else do you want me to do with it? Source: Dynel (2009: 1293)
iii	Aunt: əre beʈa tu kiʈna bəʈa ho gəʈa he! (Oh! My child how big you have become!). Child: kja kəru anʈi ɔr koi ɔpʃn hi nəhi ʈʰa (What to do aunt, there was no other option).
iv	Examiner: Tell me the name of this bird by looking at its leg. Sardar: I don't know Examiner: You failed! What's your name? Sardar: Look at my leg and guess my name.

Table 4.13: Duel and retorts

4.5. Microscopic scheme and the verbal humour involving language manipulations

Language manipulations including spelling change, grammar alterations, wordplay, etc. are common tools that produce verbal humour. According to Blake (2007) playful language manipulation is a normal habit in everyday interactions. This section concentrates on verbal humour arising due to language manipulations at various levels. Consider the following:

Grammar teacher: Analyse this sentence; Raju does not drink beer

Teacher: What is Raju in this sentence?

Children: Raju is stupid.

4.5.1. Letters, sounds, spelling and pronunciation

What type of car does your dad drive?

I do not know the name but it starts with a 'P'

That is strange; our car starts with a key.

Do you love me?

Of course darling.

But, do you love me with all your heart?

With all my heart, with all my liver, all my kidneys ...

Source: Woodlard (1999)

Don't talk to me ever again

You go your way and I'll go my way

Let's never meet again

X axis says to Y axis.

Q: What is the difference between an orange and an apple.

A: The colour of an orange is orange but the colour of an apple is not apple.

The most successful happy married life is defined as: “Yet to be seen”
 Boss: Why are you not working?
 Worker: I did not see you coming.

Secretary: Sir, there is a man in the waiting room. He claims to be invisible.
 Psychiatrist: Tell him that I cannot see him right now.

4.5.2. Word formation and oxymoron

Word play and word formation are among the most prevalent sources of experiencing verbal humour. In essence, wordplay hardly differs from puns and riddles.

Sl. No.	Word formation	Meaning
i	Reuglification	the process of becoming ugly again
ii	Kitchennaut	be a person whose job is to work in the kitchen Source ^{vi}

Table 4.14: Funny coinages

While word play is a semantic process, word formation is a morphological process. It involves compounding and reduplication. Reduplication refers to creation of new words through repetition or echoing of the one lexical item from the pair in partial or full measure. Some observable facts concerning reduplication process are following:

- a) In echo words, usually the second element echoes and carries no meaning alone.
- b) In partial or full repetitions, often the first element is less significant from the semantic viewpoint.
- c) Often the resulting compounds are different from the meanings of the combining words.
- d) Often, these creations offer hilarious juxtapositions of words carrying opposite meanings.

Among the hilarious outcomes of the word formation process the oxymoron stands distinct. In an oxymoron, two opposite meaning words co-occur and produce a single meaning. This meaning is at times highly satirises the socio-political situations and produces excessive amount of humour. Due to this behaviour, the oxymoron qualifies as a sub-class of verbal humour. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	English oxymoron	Emphasis
i	Clearly misunderstood	Not understood
ii	Exact estimate	Well calculated
iii	Small crowd	Many people
iv	Found missing	Missing
v	Fully empty	Empty
vi	Happily married	Happy
vii	Living death	Poor condition
viii	Blind follower	Following

Table 4.15a: Oxymoron in English

Funny Oxymoron

Sl. No.	Hindi Oxymoron	Meaning	Description
i	sasə mā	Mother in law	Mother in law and mother
ii	mā bap	Parents	Mom and dad
iii	mɪʈʰai ɡʰər	Sweet shop	The house is not made of sweet.
iv	tʃɪɾja ɡʰər	Zoo	The bird house, i.e. the zoo, does not only have birds. It has animals too.
v	tʃor sɪpahi kʰel	A children's game that involves enacting the role of police and thief.	The thief and police in the name itself.
vi	mətʃtʃʰərɖani	Mosquito net	The word dani would mean giver. A mosquito net does not give mosquitos.
vii	tʃohɑɖani	Rat trap	Rat trap catches rats, it does not give rats.
viii	ɡʊlab dʒamʊn	Sweet	The name of a flower and a fruit combine together to produce this sweet's name.
ix	ɖɪn rɑɖ	Day and night	Metaphorically referring to continuous involvement into something.
x	kʰun pəsɪmɑ	Blood and sweat	Metaphorically referring to a lot of work.

Table 4.15b: Oxymorons in Hindi-Urdu

Since, Hindi-Urdu permits the word formation through reduplication the occurrence for English like oxymoron is relatively less. The above instances are not very strong cases of oxymoron. However, the purpose behind including them in the list is that fact that they involve opposite and unrelated words in their construction and thereby provide scope for wordplay and hilarious manipulations.

4.5.3. Quotes containing funny oxymorons

It is very common to find deliberate as well as inadvertent employment of oxymora in public speech made by political and spiritual leaders. These uses sometimes leave scope for ambiguity and become hilarious. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Quotes with oxymorons	Made by
i	I am a deeply superficial person.	Andy Warhol
ii	Of course I can keep secrets. It's the people I tell them to that can't keep them.	Anthony Haden
iii	She used to diet on any kind of food she could lay her hands	Arthur Baer

	on.	
iv	I distinctly remember forgetting that.	Clara Barton
v	I never said most of the things I said.	Yogi Berra
vi	The best cure for insomnia is to get a lot of sleep.	W.C. Fields
vii	I can resist everything but temptation.	Mark Twain
viii	Always be sincere, even when you don't mean it.	Irene Peter
ix	I have a terrible memory. I never forget a thing.	Edith Konecky
x	I hate people but I love gatherings.	Vincent Millay
xi	We must believe in free will. We have no choice.	Isaac B. Singer
xii	Live within your income, even if you have to borrow to do so.	Josh Billings
xiii	You'd be surprised how much it costs to look this cheap.	Dolly Parton
xiv	I can believe anything, provided it is quite incredible.	Oscar Wilde
xv	The budget was unlimited, but I exceeded it.	Donald Trump

Table 4.15c: Quotes with oxymoron

Sl. No.	Set-up	Oxymoronic end
i	Hey, Yogi, what time is it?	You mean now?
ii	When you come to a fork in the road,	take it.
iii	Never make predictions,	especially about the future.
iv	You can observe a lot	just by watching.
v	This is deja vu	all over again.
vi	Nobody goes to that restaurant anymore.	It's too crowded.
vii	Ninety percent of this game is	half-mental.
viii	Anyone who is popular is	bound to be disliked.
ix	It's too much trouble	to reset all those time bombs.
x	It took some users a while to come to grips with the intuitive way	Windows works

Table 4.15d: Humour in oxymoronic replies

4.5.4. Verbal humour in idiomatic expressions

Idioms are multi-word expressions that are composite in structure, frozen in form and non-compositional in meaning. Multi-word expression here entails that idiomatic expressions consist of two or more constituents. Compositeness here refers to its similarity with phrasal verbs, proverbial phrases, clausal structures and idiomatic compounds. The word 'frozen' here refers to fixedness as idioms scarcely permit modifications. Non-compositionality is a defining characteristic of idioms referring to improbability of constituents' meanings adding up to whole meaning. The 'fixedness' and 'non-compositional' attributes are slightly debatable in the contemporary Cognitive Linguistics research. New findings have started to accommodate the view the idioms show some degree of flexibility at the level of structure and meaning.

According to Gibbs (1995: 97), figurative language has acquired a respectable status in the cognitive sciences. The ability to comprehend the idiomatic expressions of everyday life is the ultimate test of competence in a language. Idiomatic expressions are distinct because they are often highly non-compositional entailing that the meaning of an idiomatic expression is not the sum total of its constituent elements. Therefore, one

cannot always arrive at the meaning of an idiomatic expression just by knowing the participating lexemes. During speech processing, including reading and listening activities, the hearer or reader at times picks up one of the constituent's meaning and tries to decipher the meaning of the full expression. Sometimes, this becomes the cause for hilarious mismatch between the two plausible interpretations. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Idiom	Referring to	In use
i	Bob's your uncle	there you are	Take left, walk straight, take another left and Bob's your uncle.
ii	All mouth and no trousers	only words, no action	The new government is all talk and no trousers.
iii	Enough to cobble dogs with	Surplus of anything	They have consumed enough liquor to cobble dogs with.
iv	When pigs fly	Impossible	The black money stashed abroad will return to India when pigs fly.
v	For donkey's years	Considerable length of time	I have been a researcher for donkey's years; now it is time I should consider change.

Table 4.16: Humour in idiomatic expressions

4.5.5. Verbal humour in metaphoric and metonymic expressions

Metaphors and metonyms are cognitive tools that populate human interactions quite frequently. They are not only figures of speech and rhetoric devices but also a means to express abstract entities and understand conceptually different systems. Metaphors and metonyms exhibit the excellent coordination between the way mind perceives the world and language expresses it. Metaphors facilitate treating one entity as though it were another while metonyms enable the language users to speak of part to refer to whole. Together metaphors and metonyms enrich the experience of the world and the expression of it too. Traditionally, metaphors and metonyms have existed in the analysis of literary and rhetoric texts, however, recent findings on figurative language use have brought metaphors and metonyms to the forefront of Cognitive Linguistics. Present day research does not treat metaphors and metonyms as mere figures of speech that enhance the aesthetic appeal of the language use. Rather, contemporary research anchored by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) perceives them as the way human mind works. According to Goatly (2013: 166), metaphors and metonyms are more likely to become conventionalised than other figures of speech such as irony, overstatement etc. Consider the following:

Boy to girl's father: mē apkī beṭī ka haṭṭh māgne aṛa hō.

(I have come to ask for your daughter's hand)

Girl's father replies: kāmīne mē kṛa apnī beṭī ke spēṛā:ts beṭṭīā hō.

(Rascal! Do I send my daughter's spare parts?)

This is an interesting example of how metonymy and idiomatic coining can collaborate to result in hilarious jokes. In Hindi-Urdu speaking communities, the expression haṭṭh māgne

qja hõ is a common idiom for marriage proposals. In this expression, the word haḡ^h literally refers to hand while the word māḡna literally means to ask for. When they appear together, haḡ^h serves as a metonym for the person and haḡ^h māḡna becomes a metaphoric expression for marriage proposal. The father's response in the joke is adds to the hilarity because he fails to understand the metaphoric extension of the expression haḡ^h māḡna. His reply is also interesting because he uses the words spare parts as prevalent for automobiles and electronic gadgets.

4.5.6. Funny expansion of conventional abbreviations and acronyms

Unorthodox abbreviations and unorthodox expansion of common abbreviation are common ways of creating newer instances of verbal humour. For instance consider the acronym LOVE as referring to the following: Lake of sorrow, Ocean of tears, Valley of death, End of life. Consider the following example:

Sl. No.	Abbreviation / Acronym	Funny elaboration
i	LOVE	Limited Options Vindicating Everywhere
ii	PHD	Phinished
iii	THESIS	The Happiness Ends Soon It Starts
iv	FINE	Fucked up, Insecure, Neurotic, Emotional
v	ETC	End of Thinking Power

Table 4.17a: Funny expansion of abbreviations

Humour through this kind of language use is distinct because it is yet to fossilise and varies a lot from context to context. Consider multiple expansions of the same abbreviation RSVP:^{vii}

RSVP	roṅḡe sare vṛah pṛḡḡe	Everyone will cry after the marriage
RSVP	roḡi sḡbzi vaḡḡe pḡḡariḡe	Welcome for bread and curry
RSVP	riṁembḡ s3:vis veri pḡḡ	Remember service very poor
RSVP	riḡḡḡaro suḡḡro vḡrna pṛḡḡe	Relatives! Mend your ways, else you will receive beatings

Table 4.17b: Funny expansion of abbreviations

A point worth noting here is that humour involving abbreviations and acronym both makes use of the existing abbreviations and alters them for amusement. Or, alternatively, these instances of humour invent new abbreviations and acronyms. In most cases, these instances point to closed group interactions as their circulation is not universal and unless fossilised dies out with time.

4.5.7. Deft definitions

Hilarious definition assumes an important position among the instantiations of verbal humour. In these definitions, the humour initiator redefines a concept either by satirising an aspect of the concept or by establishing metaphorical connections with it. Rewriting definitions is an important strategy for creating pun like verbal humour. For example the definition of a good teacher is as follows:

A good teacher: A good teacher is one who misses at least three lectures a week. S/he

should be late to the class and leave the students before the bell rings. S/he should not assign any task, evaluate liberally, avoid asking difficult questions and most importantly should keep quiet when students are talking.

Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Concept	Deft definitions
i	Divorce	The future tense of marriage.
ii	Cigarette	A pinch of tobacco rolled in paper usually with little fire at one end and fools on the other.
iii	Miser	Somebody who lives poor so that he dies rich.
iv	Dictionary	A book that has success before work.
v	Bomb	An invention that will end all inventions.

Table 4.18a: Deft definitions

Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Words	Definition
i	Ruttafication	The process of rote learning i.e. memorising without understanding a concept.
ii	Bacteria	The backside of a cafeteria.
iii	Dogma	The mother of puppies.
iv	Ultimate	The final person one marries
v	Vice versa	Bad poem

Table 4.18b: Deft definitions

4.5.8. Metalinguistic sources of verbal humour

The case of metalinguistic humour is quite distinct from other sub-classes of verbal humour. An instance of metalinguistic humour typically focusses on the linguistic aspects such as spelling, grammar, definition, etc. to create the humorous effects. Consider the following examples:

- i. Schwa: I want to be a schwa as it is never stressed.
- ii. Synonym: A synonym is a word that you use when the actual word is difficult to spell or pronounce.
- iii. Comma: A place in a sentence when it appears almost over.
- iv. Full stop: The death of a sentence.
- v. Name a one-word sentence. Eliminate
- vi. Always use comma after however.
- vii. Can I ask you not to overuse exclamation marks???
- viii. The value of a dot is understood when B.ed becomes Bed.

Consider the following text that comments on the spelling irregularities in English. It also suggests reforms in the English spelling systems with some period and through that, it shows that such an exercise would take about twenty years to complete.

In Year 1 that useless letter "c" would be dropped to be replaced either by "k" or "s", and likewise "x" would no longer be part of the alphabet. The only case in which "c" would be retained would be the "ch" formation, which will be dealt with later. Year 2 might reform "w" spelling, so that "which" and "one" would take the same konsonant,

wile Year 3 might well abolish "y" replasing it with "i" and Iear 4 might fiks the "g/j" anomali wonse and for all. Jenerally, then, the improvement would kontinue iear bai iear with Iear 5 doing awai with useless double konsonants, and Iears 6-12 or so modifaiing vowlz and the rimeining voist and unvoist konsonants. Bai Iear 15 or sou, it wud fainali bi posibl tu meik ius ov thi ridandant letez "c", "y" and "x" -- bai now jast a memori in the maindz ov ould doderez -- tu riplais "ch", "sh", and "th" rispektivli. Fainali, xen, aafte sam 20 iers ov orxogrefkl riform, wi wud hev a lojikl, kohirnt speling in ius xrewawt xe Ingliy-spiking werld.

Source^{viii}

Basically, the purpose of the above commentary is to satirise the English spelling system.

Now, consider the following:

Three guys What, When and Why were talking

What: Why what are you doing?

Why: I do not know what I am doing.

What: Why?

Why: Why are you calling me?

What: I did not call you.

Why: What?

What: Why are you calling me?

Why: When did I call you?

When: Why are you guys bringing me in your arguments

Why: What? When?

In the above, the literal and contextual meanings of the words are contradictory to the extent that logical incongruities and anomalies arise in a hilarious way. Structurally, an instance of verbal humour of this kind may not sustain substitution of the words. However, the possibilities are high that it would remain hilarious even in translations into other languages.

Santa ne telephone booth pər dʒaʔe hi owner ko ɖo tʰəp:ɹ ləgəja

(Santa gave two slaps to the owner the moment he arrived at a telephone booth).

Owner: ɛsə kjũ kija

(Why did you do that?)

Santa: bahər likʰa tʰa daɪəl kərne se pəhle ɖo ləgəẽ.

(Outside it was written: Prefix two before dialling).

This joke requires some background information. Earlier basic telephones were limited in number. Later, when their demand grew there was a shortage in the unique numbers for each consumer. In order to accommodate the growing number of new subscribers, the telephone department decided to add the number 'two' before all existing numbers. This modification required people to dial two before dialling the numbers they wanted. The telephone booth owners used to display this information on the door of the booth. Now, the funniness arises because the information in display would say dail kərne se pəhle ɖo ləgəẽ. This expression can have two interpretations; (a) Please prefix your number with two (the literal and the one that fits into the context of phone call). (b) Give two slaps (the idiomatic and the one that causes surprise in the set-up stage of the joke).

Teacher: bəʔao e ke baɖ kja aʔa hɛ

(Say what comes after A)

Student: After thinking a lot says “kja bolṭi ṭu”
(What do you say),

“e kja bolṭi ṭu” is the opening line of lyrics from a popular Bollywood number). The humour arises in this joke due to the mismatch between what the teacher asked and what the student replied after a lot of thinking. It also satirises the situation on two levels. First, the negligence of student and parents is so high that the child can remember lyrics but not the second letter of the alphabet. Second, the academic atmosphere in the country is so dull and monotonous that movie dialogues and lyrics of the film songs receive more attention than the textbook information.

Students talking after the English test.

The exam was good but I could not answer the last question.

They asked the past tense of the word THINK.

I thought and thought but could not recall.

Finally, I wrote *thunk* as the answer.

The above joke presents an irony of the situation. The use of the past tense of think in the conversation makes it evident that the student who is the target of the joke knows the answer but fails to apply the same in the exam.

4.5.8.1. Funny questions involving linguistic concepts

Sl. No.	Funny questions	Reply
i	What are the ghosts of dead phoneticians called?	Spectral-grams
ii	What does a linguist dressed up as a pirate wear on their face?	An I-PAtch
iii	What do linguist children say when asking for candy?	Affix-or-treat!
iv	What does a linguist-ghost say?	/bu::::/
v	What does a linguist become if bitten at the full moon?	A wordwolf
vi	What do you call several jack-o-lanterns with the designs that change depending on their environment?	Allo-phompkins
vii	What's the most pragmatic way to disguise yourself?	Wear a Gricean Mask-im
viii	Why can bags of bones travel through time?	Because they're skele-tense
ix	What would you call a famous linguist with an appetite for brains?	Noamnomnom Zombsky
x	What is the appropriate month for making linguistics halloween jokes?	Wugtober

Table 4.19: Funny questions^{ix}

4.5.9. Doggerel and verbal humour in poetic forms

Humour in poetic forms is a genre in its own. These forms involving creative wordplays are highly prevalent among the Hindi-Urdu speakers.

Sl. No.	Doggerel and verbal humour in poetic forms	English translation ^x
i	kısməŋ mē raŋ ko nıŋd nəhı ŋo kja aıje kısməŋ ko tʃona ləgaŋe hē ɔr ɖın ko hi so dzaŋe hē	What if luck does not have sleep at night Let us bluff the luck itself And sleep during the day
ii	səmədʒ ^h səmədʒ ^h ke səmədʒ ^h o səmədʒ ^h səmədʒ ^h ke səmədʒ ^h na b ^{hi} ek səmədʒ ^h hē səmədʒ ^h səmədʒ ^h ke dʒo na səmədʒ ^h e meri səmədʒ ^h mē vo nasəmədʒ ^h hē	Understand and understand through understanding Understanding through understanding is also an understanding The one does not understand even after understanding Is fool in my understanding
iii	ɖali ɖali pe nəzər ɖali, kısı ne ətʃtʃ ^{hi} ɖali kısı ne bəri ɖali, dʒıs ɖali pe mēne nəzər ɖali uohi ɖali kısı ne tɔr ɖali	Looked at branch after branch Some put the good look, some put the bad The branch that I looked at Somebody broke that branch
iv	mər həm b ^{hi} gəje mərhəm ke lıje mərhəm na mıla mərhəm ke lıje həm ɖəm se gəje həmɖəm na mıla	I died for the ointment Did not get the ointment I gave life for the ointment Did not get the life partner
v	ɖər se ɖəro nəhı dʒəst fart it har aı rədʒni kanŋ maıd it	Do not fear the fear, just fight it Hi! I am Rajnikanth, mind it.
vi	pjar həmə kıs moŋ pe le aja ıŋni ɖər k ^h əŋe hē pər bəs hi nəhı a rəhi hē	What turn love has brought me to Have been standing for so long the bus does not come
vii	pjar həmə kıs moŋ pe le aja ıŋni ɖər k ^h əŋe hē pər bəs me nəhı a rəhi hē	What turn love has brought me to Have been standing for so long the she does not get into the bus
viii	b ^h əle hı dʒəmane ko ɖık ^h ane ke lıje pər həsla tʃahıje məskorane ke lıje	Even if to show the world But, courage is needed to smile

Table 4.20: Humour in doggerels and poetic forms

4.3.10. Multimodal humour

The term multimodal humour here refers to such instances of jokes where the main impact of the joke comes due to collective use of media such as text, image, voice and video. The use of multimodal humour is most evident in cartoons and stand-up comedy. The first decade of the 21st century has seen a steep rise in the use of multimodal humour. The rise is due to easy access to computers and the Internet coupled with graphics and animations. This has been constantly affecting the presentation of jokes.

4.5.11. Self-denigrating and self-enhancing humour

The self-denigrating humour and self-enhancing humour represent self-reflexive humour a special kind of humour use where the target of the joke is often the introducer

himself/herself. Other names for self-denigrating humour include self-directed humour, self-deflating humour, self-depreciating humour, self-disparagement humour etc. Self-enhancing humour are humorous acts of self-promotion and aggrandisement. Both self-denigrating and self-enhancing humour may exist in different guise though, these forms of self-reflexive humour are quite common and the language users often employ them to achieve some pre-planned goals. These instances of humour exhibit the following motivations:

1. Endeavour towards attention seeking
2. Averting an aggression on self
3. Accomplishment of pedagogical objectives
4. Establishment of favourable rapport with (un)familiar audience
5. Confessional revelation about past self
6. Satirical, ironic or insulting remarks to other interlocutors in the interaction
7. Exaggerating or introducing an over-ambitious project

The self-reflexive variety of humour is available at all platforms and in all formats. Consequently, the examples of self-directed humour are available in forms of jokes, cartoons, stand-up comedy and many more. The build-up through manipulative use of language and they tend to mislead by design. From the structural point of view, these instances of humour mostly include the following patterns: (a) Question-answer type, (b) Funny wishes, and (c) Knock-knock jokes. If one attempts a formal description of these typical humour uses, one would arrive at the following:

- i. Question: What is X?
Answer: X is Y.
No X is Y`
- ii. X is so Y that Z
- iii. Knock-knock. Who is that?
It is X. Who X?
X` that is/did Y

Question: Should women have children after thirty-five?
Answer: No! Thirty-five children are more than enough.

An important aspect of these jokes is that the response to them varies considerably. Some people find them ‘very funny’, some find them ‘little funny’, yet others find them ‘not funny at all’. Through self-directed humour, an individual can project, reaffirm, or contrast his/her during social interactions. It serves as a means of socialisation, for it lowers the probability of hostile behaviour in such interactions and enables new members to accommodate in the group without threatening the existing members’ space.

... there is more to meaning than can be found in a dictionary and more to ambiguity than can be revealed by diagnoses of deep structure and logical form.

Goldstein (1990: 43)

Linguistics	Humour research
Strings	Grammatical texts
Sentences	Jokes

Grammaticality	Being a joke
Sentence type	Subclass of jokes
Structural description	Description of a joke
Grammar rule(s)	Pattern for class of jokes
Theory of grammar	Theory of jokes
Theory of language use	Theory of humour use

Table 4.21: Linguistics-Humour analogy

Source: Ritchie (2000: 72)

One of the most important issues concerning the linguistic mechanisms of verbal humour is the significance of linguistic structure. Is there something special about the language use in verbal humour? If so, how does that differ from that of the language in day-to-day interactions? Mihalcea & Pulman (2007: 337) posits somewhat similar questions:

- a) Are humorous and serious texts separable, and does this property hold for different datasets? and
- b) If so, what are the distinctive features of humour, and do they hold across datasets?

Mihalcea & Pulman adopted a text-based approach and focused on these questions from the viewpoint of computational linguistics and automatic humour recognition. They studied a selective language use such as humorous headlines and knock-knock jokes. They report the following

“Humorous and serious texts can be separated at the linguistic level, and also that this holds for at least two different datasets: short one-liners, and long news articles. Of course there are many other types of humorous and non-humorous prose and it may be that some of these are more difficult to separate.” Mihalcea & Pulman (2007: 346)

The above questions are difficult to answer in a clear yes or no. Participating or polarising this debate on humorous versus non-humorous language use or even responding to the above questions in either affirmative or negative has repercussions of its own. Moreover, this does not explain anything significant about the planning and processing human speech. At this juncture, a conclusion not hard to accept is that verbal humour involves language manipulations and without that verbal humour would lose funniness.

4.5.12. Counterfactual headlines: An analysis

This section focuses on the counterfactual headlines of *The Faking News* an online portal for humour, parody, satire and spoof. The language manipulations in its headlines include spelling alternations, word formations, polysemization and ambiguation through wordplay & flouting of the maxims of conversation. The interpretative strategies it includes are plain statements with unexpected elaboration, exaggeration & overextension of proposals, counterfactual accounts of an event, repetition of the statements, straight questions & twisted answers and incongruous linking between true statements. Some of them are contextual, necessitating prior knowledge. While others simply fit into incidents across time and cultures. The former type is ephemeral and constitutes the ‘second generation jokes’ or ‘para jokes’ (cf. Attardo 2001: 70) whereas the later type is

‘conversational jokes’ and constitutes the category ‘canned jokes.’ Consider the following headlines as examples:

Sl. No.	Instances of hilarious headlines
i.	After constantly losing “National Spelling Bee” to Indian origin kids, US looking for a new national language.
ii.	Indian teen bags “International Calligraphy Award” for writing in public toilets.
iii.	UNESCO stops Google from shutting down Orkut, declares it a “heritage site.”
iv.	With DU admissions delayed, boy puts his marks in bank to earn interest on it and qualify for cut-offs.
v.	Making sex education part of school curriculum will make students lose interest in sex: Harsh Vardhan.
vi.	US to attack King’s Landing to establish democracy after Tyrion tells them about oil beneath it.
vii.	Delhi University’s FYUP deadlock resolved, students allowed to bunk 1 out of 4 years.
viii.	Government to pay Google \$20 billion for acquiring IRCTC.
ix.	BMC to dig potholes and fill water in them so that Mumbaikars do not miss the delayed monsoon.
x.	First batch of containers leave for Switzerland to fetch black money.

Table 4.22: Hilarious headlines^{xi}

The above headlines have two sets of information, both exhibiting some kind of intertextuality. The first would be humourless without the second, while the second would fail to make sense without the first. One perspective on these posts including the headlines, the narrations and the commentaries is that they are instances of mass communication with the potential to inform and entertain the viewers. However, this research goes beyond the basal description to uncover the attempts of ‘coercive reinterpretations’. As the title suggests, it explores whether the concerned headlines simply humour the viewers or force reinterpretations of the events, linguistic or whatsoever.

The fake headlines provide an excellent corpus of data to study how language manipulation, frame shift and coercive reinterpretations take place. The significance of such a study includes the following:

- a) Development of ideas about the linguistic and cognitive strategies of humour, satires, parody and spoof.
- b) Synthesis of approaches from humour studies and cognitive linguistics.
- c) Addition to the body of knowledge about the entertainment discourse.
- d) Application of theories to mini texts such as headlines.
- e) Formation of a corpus of humorous headlines of counterfactual reports.
- f) Ideas about the deliberate transmutation of day-to-day events.

The present study tracked the headlines published on *The Faking News* (TFN) for seven months and built a corpus of the same to conduct an analysis of the counterfactual headlines. This research restricts its focus on use of language and the manipulations

therein resulting in cognitive transmutations. The video programmes like ‘*So Sorry*’ & ‘*Dhol Ki Pol*’ and caricatures like ‘*You Said It*’ & ‘*Cartoonscapes*’ are interesting and impactful but it cannot consider them because they are multimodal, that is to say, they employ a host of techniques other than language manipulation and transmutation of the events. The data of TFN and TUT is available in the electronic format. Therefore, it is not difficult to perform a text analysis of the corpus. The Lix analysis on a thousand word long corpus of funny headlines revealed the following information:

Sl. No.	Parameter	Data
1	Total number of words	9192
2	Total number of characters	47,632
3	Total number of full stops	680
4	Total number of long words	2596
5	Total number of words per full stop	13.51
6	Total number of different words	3505
7	Lexical variety	0.38
8	Percentage long words	28.24
9	Readability	41.75

Table 4.23: Lix analysis of fake headlines

Ultimately, the headlines are available at TFN and TUT for reading. The web portal expects the viewers to read them for fun. This readability criterion will obviously influence the sentence structure and the lexical choice headlines. The above data points to high readability aspect of the text. The less use of infrequent and long words (words with seven or more characters) is an index to the same.

They mostly utilize simultaneous portrayal of two ideas that are humorous but not real. On some occasions, the TFN and TUT headlines open up with a real event and latter insert an imaginary idea into it. While on other counts, they open up an imaginary idea and accommodate the real event into it. Their success lies in the fact that they do it with extra-ordinary precision. The planting of real and imaginary events causes a momentary cognitive dissonance in the viewers. They strike the right balance by assisting the viewers to reach back to cognitive consistency.

Molek-Kozakowska’s ideas about the coercive strategies are relevant. In addition, the fake headlines heavily rely upon viewers’ desperation to arrive at cognitive consistency and overcome cognitive dissonance. The headlines in the above example have appeared on the web portals of TFN and TUT that originated in 2009 and 2011 respectively. This section prepared the following convenient pairs to classify the headlines collected from both the web portals:

- (a) Products and principles: This set included headlines that focussed on the name of particular brand including popular events organised by political and sports organisations.
- (b) Tickle and reason: This set included the headlines that suggest or recommend the application of an idea or thing in such a way that it tickles, but with acceptable reasons.
- (c) Lurid and logic: This set contains the headlines that are fake announcements but they follow a logical path.
- (d) Elaborate and crisp notes: The headlines in this set contrast with each other for size. One extreme comprises of very elaborate headlines, which may not need any

elaboration while the other extreme embodies very precise headlines, which may be in the process to become funny one-liners.

- (e) Figurative and literal: This is indeed the most populous set all fake headlines depend on figurative use of language.

“Metaphor is not only a cognitive but also pragmatic phenomenon, since its perlocutionary effects and felicitous uses are as important to study as its embodied bases or cognitive structuring. Moreover, the stability of conventionalized metaphors is often central to pragmatically efficient interaction.” Molek-Kozakowska (2014: 2)

Khan (2014) offers an analysis into the coercive nature of the language manipulation in fake headlines that are hilarious.

4.5.13. Ambiguous utterances and humorous garden-paths

Ambiguous constructions are constructions with two or more possible interpretations. The two interpretations can be related and compatible or unrelated and incompatible. In cases of humorous ambiguities, the interpretations are excessively incompatible. Ambiguities can occur at both lexical and syntactic levels. Garden-paths are special constructions in throw reading and comprehension challenges. The reader/hearer needs to re-read the stimuli in order to comprehend them. The term ‘garden-path’ comes from the idiom “to lead somebody up to the garden path” meaning deceiving or misleading someone. The garden path constructions point to a variety of language use that requires adjustments from the initial comprehension. Not all garden path constructions are humorous per se. Therefore, humorous garden path are distinct in nature. Consider the following:

- i. Change cannot be given to you always.
You must try to bring change on your own.
Great lines said by a bus conductor!
- ii. I prefer to take out all the clothes at night.
I mean from the ropes, since there is no certainty of rain.

Double meaning and scope for humorous ambiguity is an essential ingredient in these constructions. According to Dynel (2009: 1)

“these are short humorous texts couched in covert ambiguity (of various types) emergent only at the final stage of on-line processing, when the initially overt and obvious (default/salient) interpretation needs to be cancelled and superseded by an alternative meaning, so far covert.”

and

“... many of the rules of syntax are such that to violate them is to fail to engage in the language; in this respect they resemble the constitutive rules of chess. But there are other rules such that a speaker can violate them, or at least deviate from them, without thereby ceasing to speak the language.” Goldstein (1990: 38)

Garden path utterances, according to Mayerhofer (2014: 10), are usually quite short texts that unify the outlines character of humorous stimuli with the exploitation of semantic-pragmatic discourse comprehension mechanisms. Consider the following:

- i. I want to die peacefully in my sleep like my grandfather. Not screaming in terror like his passengers.

Source: Mayerhofer (2014: 1).

- ii. Do not drink and drive. You might hit a bump and spill your drink.

Source: Dynel (2009: 1).

Mayerhofer's dissertation focuses on three aspects of garden-path expressions. These aspects are (i) the salience of the first interpretation, (ii) the accessibility of the hidden interpretation, and (iii) the humorous potential of the whole joke. According to Dynel (2009: 18) the garden-path sentences operates on the deception of the hearer due to syntactic ambiguity.

Sl. No.	Grammatical aspect	Example
i	Main Clause – Relative NP Ambiguity	The horse raced past the barn fell.
ii	Complement Clause – Relative Clause Ambiguity	The doctor told the patient he was having trouble with to leave.
iii	Object – Subject Ambiguity	After Susan drank the water evaporated.
iv	Double Object Ambiguity	Todd gave the boy the dog bit a bandage.
v	Lexical Ambiguity	The old train the children.

Table 4.24a: Types of ambiguity^{xii}

Consider the following utterance from Hindi-Urdu:

Sl. No.	Garden path humour in Hindi-Urdu	English translation ^{xiii}
i	<p>ese həzərō bəʃf:e hē dʒinko mā ka āʃʃəl nəsiɓ nəhī</p> <p>ak^hɪr dʒins tɔp pəhənnə vali məm:ɪjā āʃʃəl kəhā se ləē</p>	<p>There are thousands of such children who are not fortunate enough to get love and protection from their mothers.</p> <p>How can the jeans and top wearing mothers provide the feeling of love and protection children get when their mothers cover them through a portion of the sarī.</p>

Table 4.24b: Humour in GP constructions

In the above, it is noticeable that the set-up part hints at children's problems. It exploits the consensus about the plight of children the world over. In the Indian context, the care and protection that children receive from their mothers have been expressed symbolically through /āʃʃəl/ 'the very last portion of a sari used for covering children by mothers to protect them from cold and the sun etc. in the Hindi-Urdu. In the above, the expression mā ka āʃʃəl metaphorically refers to feelings of love and security children experience in their mother's lap. However, the second part of the utterance informs that the overall utterance had considers the first part as set-up and meant it literally. It is also important to note here that sarī (saree) is a dress style of Indian origin that usually, grown up and married women wear. The term āʃʃəl is a long hanging part of sarī that mothers use to cover their children while feeding them and while making them go asleep. The second part of the utterance reveals that it does not mean āʃʃəl metaphorically it is a comment on the changing trends evident through women's preference for jeans and tops over sarī. At

the surface level, the above example may hint at casual sexism, for it comments on the dressing preference of the female group.

4.6. Structural descriptions and interpretations

Every instance of verbal humour has an identifiable structure in language. However, it is still not easy to identify them and exactly specify that component of an utterance that causes the funniness. Koestler (1978: 118) maintains that

“To analyse humor is a task as delicate as analysing the chemical composition of perfume with its multiple ingredients – some of which are never consciously perceived, while other, while sniffed in isolation, would make us wince.”

However, the task is not that hopeless too. The analysis of verbal humour requires the knowledge of structural norms and various parametric restrictions on them alongside the acumen in the identification of violation of such norms. According to Ritchie (2000: 72),

“... one should specify in some detail the various abstract objects that are posited as underlying the texts (e.g. symbolic representations of meaning), the various properties that these objects have (e.g. denoting a taboo subject) and the various interrelations which hold between them (e.g. one meaning being more obvious than another, one word sounding similar to another). An analysis of a joke is then a precise listing of this information for the joke, at a suitable level of abstraction.”

This section provides a collection of verbal humour of the various types discussed above. It also provides discussion on the structure of some of them. The presentation is categorical as in the examples occur according to various identifiable components of the human language.

Spelling manipulation, unorthodox spellings and inadvertent misspelling

Question: How can you make seven an even number?

Answer: Drop the first letter ‘s’ seven becomes even.

A Hindi speaking student looking at his report card,

kʃɑ mɛ̃ p^hel ho gəʃɑ

What! I failed?

vəh b^hi ɪŋɡlɪʃ mɛ̃ ənpɑosibəl

That too in English? Unpossible!

Question: What is the capital of England?

Answer: The letter E.

Source: Blake (2007: 2)

Sound manipulation, unorthodox pronunciation, inadvertent mispronunciation and the onomastic perspectives

A very common method to generate verbal humour is by manipulating some sounds/syllables of proper names and place names. This method of onomastic and toponymic nature is highly productive. As a humour phenomenon it is prevalent across cultures. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Hindi-Urdu Names	Blended Forms	English equivalents
i	b ^h ora k ^h an	b ^h ok ^h a	Hungry
ii	ruṣṭam k ^h an	ruk ^h a	Dry
iii	ākt d ^h aria	and ^h a	Blind
iv	d ^h andzi d ^h aria	d ^h and ^h a	Business
v	gāga d ^h as	gand ^h a	Dirty
vi	hald ^h i ram	hara	Green
vii	māno ram	māra	Dead
viii	t ^h amān lal	t ^h ala	Walked
ix	gird ^h ari lal	gila	Wet
x	piṭamān lal	pila	Yellow

Table 4.25: Name blending^{xiv}

In the above examples, the first syllables of both the good name and the surname blend to create lexical items that are meaningful but unexpected as individuals' names.

Rhyme manipulation, unorthodox rhyme and inadvertent rhyme

These instantiations follow the conventional rhymes partly and inject creative alterations in them to create surprise and amusement. The conventional part helps in establishing familiarity with the utterances and causes of expectation for the remaining part. The remaining part differs in such a way that overall rhythm and rhymes remain identical to the original but a new funny utterance comes about. For example consider this:

Twinkle twinkle little star what you say is what you are

Source (Cook 2000: 2)

Now, consider the following example from Hindi:

ṭikola ṭikola am ka at^har k^hao pi^ho maro d^hakar

Raw mango, raw mango, mango pickle, eat drink and burp.

It is a fruitless exercise to look up for meaning in these instances of verbal humor. However, they have an objective somewhat similar to tongue twisters or riddles. They are useful in phonological development of the children. In addition, they also serve as elements for amusement, friendly teases and socialisation of new members in the group.

Morphemic manipulation, unorthodox affixation and inadvertent lexicalization

d ^h arm piṭa	god father	Not actual father
d ^h arm māṭa	god mother	Not actual mother
d ^h arm b ^h ai	god brother	Not actual brother
d ^h arm b ^h ai	god sister	Not actual sister
d ^h arm p ^h ai	Wife	Actual wife??

Table 4.26: Morphemic manipulations

Phrasal manipulation, unorthodox syntax and inadvertent expressions

In these instances of humour the funniness arises due to deliberate or inadvertent mismatch at the level of discourse particles, pronouns and multi-word expressions. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Language manipulation at morpho-syntactic level
i	The police are looking for a boy with one eye called Ravi. Why are they looking with one eye? They should use both their eyes.
ii	The police are inquiring about the boy with one eye called Ravi Then, what is his other eye called?
iii	If you cannot change the girl, change the girl.

Source^{xv}

Table 4.27: Morpho-syntactic manipulations

Overgeneralization, over regularization and over extension of rules

Wordplay and neologism

Wordplay refers to creative manipulation of the sense relations of words. It is one of the most significant strategies available in the human language. In fact, wordplay has a larger space in day-to-day interactions than most people including scholar have recognized. The wordplay interactions are full of transpositions that refer to swapping of words or parts thereof. Sometimes these instances of swapping, either by accident or by deliberate use, result in humorous outcomes.

Blake (2007: 8) discusses the use of transpositions as a strategy for generating humour. Consider the following examples:

It's not the men in your life that counts.



It's the life in your men.

Source: Blake (2007: 8)

Sl. No.	Wordplay in Hindi-Urdu	English equivalent
i	ƒarabi: daktər sab kja ap meri ƒarab tʃʰʊɾəva səktə hẽ daktər: hã kjõ nəhĩ ƒarabi: ʈ tʃʰʊɾəva ɖijje na pʊlis ne ɖo peɽi pəkəɽ rəkʰi he	Drunkard: Doctor, can you free alcohol. Doctor: Yes, why not! Drunkard: Then please free it, police have caught two boxes.
ii	titʃər: kja koi bina kʰana kʰae jində rəh səktə he bæcca: hã kjõ nəhĩ. titʃər: kəse bətʃʃa: nəʃʃa kər ke	Teacher: Can anyone survive without eating food? Student: Yes, why not Teacher: How? Child: Through breakfast.
iii	ðis minz jəh ʈ vət minz kja? pʊtʃʰne vala ʊllu ʈ bæɽəð mẽ kja?	This means yah, then what does what mean? The one asking is owl so I say what

Table 4.28: Wordplay in Hindi-Urdu

In the above the first joke has the Hindi-Urdu expression ƒarab tʃʰʊɾəvaana that may refer to either get rid of alcoholism or get released from police custody. However, the first interpretation is more probable in general discussions and definitely it is the only interpretation possible in the doctor-patient interaction.

In the second, the word *k^hana* can refer to either general food or the specific food that people take as lunch. The polysemous character of this work is causing amusement in the humour.

In the third, the question word ‘*kja*’ that refers to *what* serves the double role of questions as well as answer and thereby evokes the experience of humour.

Flouting/violation of maxims of conversation due to mismatch between the said and intended and between the said and mentioned.

A: Where does this road go?

B: Only people and vehicles go, road does not go anywhere.

(Violating the maxims of conversation and cooperative principle).

A: Do you have a watch? (Intending to ask time)

B: Yes (Failing to understand beyond the literal)

False logic and ludicrous speech acts

If two witches would watch two watches, which witch would watch which watch?

Sardar to his servant: Go and water the plants

Servant: It's already raining.

Sardar: So what? Take an umbrella and go.

A person was swimming in the pool.

Pool's care taker: Dear sir, please come out of the water, swimming is not allowed here.

Man: I am not swimming, I am drowning.

Adapted from Woolard (1999: 2)

Some girls hold their guy's hand in shopping malls.

It looks romantic but the real reason is something else.

If left alone, they would start flattering with other girls.

Some guys hold their girl's hand in shopping malls.

It looks romantic, but the real reason is economic.

If left alone, they would buy the whole shopping mall.

Partial or wrong application of discourse strategies

The humorous effect in an instance of verbal humour may arise due to the partial or wrong application of the discourse strategies. This entails inappropriate application of deixis, reference terms, repetitive use of catchphrase, faulty substitution etc. Consequently, the text in concern lacks in interconnection of meaning among the words and phrases and the overall cohesion. For a text to qualify as humorous it is essential that there is interdependence of meaning among the words in it. Technically, such a relationship of interdependence between words is called cohesion. Cohesion is a semantic device that is essential in the production and comprehension of humorous instantiations. From semantic and pragmatic standpoints a text achieves cohesion through reference, substitution, ellipsis, etc. These devices enable a text to contain a certain level of ambiguity that would render it plural and humorous inferences. According to Liu (2010: 91), cohesion occurs when parts of the discourse are dependent upon each other and these

devices are responsible for bringing in fun in the text. Concentrating on the cohesive devices present in natural languages, Liu (2010: 90) demonstrates how reference, substitution, ellipsis, inference, polysemy and homonymy frequently occurring as cohesive devices can result in humorous outcomes. Consider the following example:

First lady: Who is that ugly looking man?

Second lady: That is my husband.

First lady: Sorry, it was my mistake.

Second lady: No, it was my mistake.

In this joke the reference word ‘it’ occurs at the third and fourth turns in the conversation. In the third turn, the word ‘it’ refers to the first lady’s ignorance about the fact that the man was her husband. However, in the fourth turn, the word ‘it’ refers to the second lady’s regret over marrying an ugly looking man. Both of them use the same expression *it was my mistake* but they refer to very different things.

Sl. No.	Humour through manipulations in discourse strategy
i	Doctor: Nurse! Did you take the patient’s temperature? Nurse: Why doctor? Is it missing?
ii	Child: Can I get a moonglass? Father: Never heard of it, what will you do with it? Child: You use sunglass for the day; I will use moonglass for the night. Source: Reader’s Digest, January 2015
iii	A girl wanted to order books from a publishing house. Her parents were not convinced. The girl said, “Just send them a cheque and save the real money for food.” Source: Reader’s Digest January, 2015
iv	A: It’s hard to get boys to wash. B: Oh, I don’t know. There are lots of dirty boys around. Source: Blake (2007: 7)
v	My husband and I divorced because of religious differences. He thought he was God and I didn’t. Source: Blake (2007: 4)

Table 4.29: Manipulations of discourse strategy

In the above set of examples the first one has the nurse wrongly inferring the meaning of the expression ‘*taking the temperature.*’ The humorous effect arises when she asks if the temperature was missing as though she could have stolen it.

The second one shows rule generalisation or wordplay. The term sunglass is an endocentric compound in which the words sun and glass combine to produce sunglass. As a lexical term it refers to an object that protects the user’s eyes from excessive brightness during summer days and ultraviolet rays. The child’s demand for a moonglass is an overextension of the same combinatorial rule that produces the word sunglass.

The third instantiation has the girl failing to understand the difference between the intricacies of the cheque and currency notes. For her the currency notes are real whereas the cheque is just another piece of paper. However, she is aware of the purchase value of both cheque and currency notes.

In the fourth example the word ‘boys’ in the first sentence leads one to assume that it is a generic reference to the category of boys. This sentence also points to a fact that may be true of some cultures that it is easier to manage girls’ cleanliness than that of boys. However, the second sentence creates the humorous effect when the second party fails to perceive the generic category of boys and reads it quantitatively.

The final instantiation in this set of examples has two turns. The first one is the set-up that leads one to assume that the husband and the wife belong to different faiths. However, the second turn reveals that it was a manifestation of power disequilibrium in the family that led to the divorce.

The following is a humorous poetry that satirises the political scenario of India. It takes on the politicians who make false promises during their speeches especially during the election time and once elected forget the people who elected them including their official constituencies. It reveals the apathy of the political situation in a humorous way and remains relevant across different political regimes.

karvā ki baṭ kərə, mənzilō ki baṭ kərə, səṭkē bənai nāhī, vaṭ iz dīs aṭe hi tṣonav mki dṣəbʰəkṭi dʒag dʒaṭi dʒaṭe hi tṣonav vaḍə [aē [aē pʰis pəhle ʒo je bolṭe hē ai lʌv ju baḍ mē je pʊtʰṭe hē kən hɛ be tʊ pəl pəl mē bəḍəṭi inki bʰaʃa dḍekʰre bʰrəʃt lokṭənṭra ka tṣəmaʃa dḍekʰre ʃəkuni ne pʰek dḍija pasa dḍekʰre bʰrəʃt lokṭənṭra ka tṣəmaʃa dḍekʰre pavər ka misuz hua hər kərektər luz hua njaj ka tṣərazu kəhī fri:z ho gəja azaḍi bʰi fek hui dʒənṭa mængo ʃek hui aḍəʃḍō ka tʃublait kəhī fʃuz ho gəja kursi hui məllika vipaʃa dḍekʰre əssi ki umər mē əbʰilaʃa dḍekʰre azaḍi ki nəi pəriḃʰaʃa dḍekʰre bʰrəʃt lokṭənṭra ka tṣəmaʃa dḍekʰre	Talking about caravan, talking about destination Did not make roads, what is this Their patriotism wakes up as the election comes The promises die out as the election is over First, they would say I love you Later, they ask who are you See how their language changes every moment See the melodrama of corrupt democracy Power is misused, every character is loose The balance of justice has become frozen Freedom is fake and public is mango shake The tube light of idealism seems fuze See how chair has become Mallika and Bipasha See the desires of eighty years old See the new definition of freedom See the melodrama of corrupt democracy
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Table 4.30: Humorous poetry^{xvi}

This poetry of the above form is popular for both entertainment as well as political awareness. The above example does not subscribe to any political ideology. Rather, it mocks at the general state of affairs and tries to draw people’s attention towards it. This kind of poetry is a common thing at events like comic recitals, realty shows and poets’ meets.

4.7. Failed humour and bad humour

Not all instantiations of humour succeed. On numerous counts, humour initiated by an interlocutor falls flat and it is not difficult to identify such failures. However, failed humour did not enter into the research arena until very recently. Therefore, there is very

little literature on this significant aspect of discourse and conversation. According to Attardo (2015: 183)

“The topic of failed humour has not been a significant part of discussion in discourse analysis, even though it should have been very important since most discourse analysis research in humour assumes, implicitly or explicitly, that laughter correlates with humor.”

Some questions that appear pertinent to failed humour are as following?

- a) What can qualify as failed humour?
- b) How and why do some instances of humour fail?
- c) Is failure inherent in the structure of humour or it depends on the participants' mental state or the overall situation?
- d) How does failed humour fit into humour research?

The first question may sound very trivial but in fact, humour fails. A quick answer to this question is as follows: an instance of humour that fails to cause laughter or pleasure of amusement qualifies as failed humour. This answer is problematic as laughter and pleasure of amusement are not reliable indices of successful humour. Numerous scholars have argued that laughter can occur without humour being the cause of it and humour can occur without causing laughter. Therefore, success or failure of humour is a subjective judgement and may vary considerably. However, the cause and manner of failure remain interesting issues concerning failed humour.

The second question seeks to illustrate the manner in which humour fails and predict the probable reasons for its failure. There may be several reasons for the failure of humour. Of these, some are applicable only to specific instances of failed humour but not to all instances of it. Consider for instance, the mismatch of situations, the use of language, the delivery of humour, lack of exposure on part of the recipient etc. In precise, an endeavour to deliver humour may fail or even backfire if one of the ‘maxims of humorous conversation’ is violated (Raskin 1985) or one of the ‘Knowledge Resources’ (KR) has zero correspondence (Attardo 1994 & 2001). One can also extend the violation of maxims and inadequacy at one of the KRs to lack of benign violation (McGraw & Warner 2014).

The third question interrogates the architectural structure of humour, the personality dispositions of the interlocutors and the situation in which they are testing a piece of humour. It is difficult to say if one of these is solely responsible for failure. If the scholars knew it, the recipes for invincible humour would be ready by now. However, one can safely say that these causes are more salient than others are and among them, the most salient varies from case to case.

The final question seeks justification for the inclusion of failed humour in Humour Studies. In other words, it seeks to know if a failed humour is also an instance of humour. Humour researchers would answer this question in affirmative. In most instances, a failed humour carries the same language structure and cognitive design but it fails because the situation is unfit or the recipient's behaviour is indifferent to such instances of humour. Therefore, it is only natural for failed humour to be part of humour research. However, there is a need to distinguish between failed humour and humour in bad taste. While both are instances of humour, the ‘failed’ humour falls flat and does not evoke any response. On the contrary, the ‘bad’ humour or humour in bad taste evokes protest of varying degrees. Bad humour usually ignores the cultural and religious norms. Tabooed objects, blasphemous thoughts and tasteless activities naturally qualify as topics of bad humour.

Such instances of humour in the form of jokes and cartoons have often spark controversies, attract outrage, and receive condemn. The prophet cartoons by a Danish cartoonist had seen protests by Islamic followers across the world. Kuipers (2015) calls it humour scandal.

The language structure and cognitive design of these instances of humour are same as their 'gentle' or 'decent' counterparts; however, the intra-cultural and inter-cultural differences render some of them the status of good humour and others the status of bad humour. The decision concerning good or bad status of humour is related to personhood and authenticity (ibid 2015: 127). In all circumstances, the decision concerning the good/bad status of humour rests in the socio-cultural contexts. Consider for instance, the issue of humour involving god talks, god names and the god metaphors. Humour involving the sacred and supernatural elements such as angels and gods is an unexceptionable dimension of closed group as well as inter-cultural interactions. Most cultures have (un)documented jokes and other kinds of humorous speech acts in which gods also feature. The academicians, religious and political leaders make frequent use of such humorous and purposive speech acts that demonstrates how language mirrors the power dynamics of the speech community. However, there are fewer or no studies on humour involving gods. Such a study may proceed with examination of social interactions and speech acts observed from following angles; (i) Jokes involving interactions with gods, (ii) Jokes involving gods as an absent third party and (iii) Jokes involving gods as metaphors. The following questions become relevant such a study:

- a) What are the nature and contexts of humor involving gods and sacred things?
- b) How humorous effects are embedded into interactions involving delicate and sensitive issues such as gods, Employers and Teachers?
- c) How can power relation be interpreted in typically humorous interactions involving, the humans & god(s) and gods & gods?
- d) Are there inter-cultural variations with respect to jokes involving gods?
- e) What power relations do jokes involving god exhibit?

A clear and precise answer to the above questions is difficult to arrive at. However, intra-cultural and inter-cultural differences in forms of value system, conversational norms and religious beliefs may help answer them satisfactorily. For such study, it is important to consider the day-to-day language use and interactions from the socio-pragmatic and critical-discourse perspectives. Subsequently, the findings will be valid and relevant to plural and diverse interactions taking place at schools, colleges, social forums, cyber communication and workplace.

4.8. A comparative perspective

This section offers a structural and conceptual comparison across various sub-types of verbal humour. In other words it presents the most distinct aspect of the various types of verbal humour. One way to perceive jokes as distinct from stand-up comedy or other sub-genres of verbal humour is to see them as an element within everyday language interactions of the common masses. Stand-up comedy is a performance and therefore it requires an audience. The funniness in these performances arises simply because of repetition or due to somebody's style. Therefore, there is no strict semantic criterion that controls stand-up comedy. Jokes and pun on the other hand, require the knowledge of language on most counts. Wordplay and riddles are highly conventional and require literacy in the concerned language. Tongue twisters are conventional too but they are

mostly a rural phenomenon and sustain through the oral tradition. They have elements of phonology and semantics competing against each other. They form a kind of an oral gymnastics or verbal play. Counterfactual headlines and one-liners are one sentence long and usually contain two phrases; one performs the set-up and the other incongruence. Joke cycles are about individuals or events that have suddenly become popular. Joke cycle focus on the typical nature of the individual or the event. Oxymoron presents the tiniest examples of verbal humour. Most often an oxymoron is humorous when it occurs in context. Deft definitions are misleading definitions that reveal or satirise the social situations. Deft definitions alter the existing definitions or create present fresh definitions that are untrue but resembling to the genuine definitions with respect to style and lexical choices. Verbal-visual or visual-verbal is new class that is the most distinct of all. This class collects and blends information from text and a relatable image or an image and its textual description.

Lexically, these utterances make use of short and frequently occurring words. They are easily pronounceable, except for the tongue twisters. Semantically, they make extensive use of polysemy and homonymy. Syntactically, these utterances make use of ambiguity and recursion for humorous gains. From the cognitive linguistic perspective, they make across the board use of metaphor and metonymy. Overall, they are highly readable. From the readability viewpoint, these utterances pose below average level of difficulty, as the words in them are short in size and frequent in use.

4.9. Readability of humorous texts

The general platforms for the broadcast of verbal humour being written and spoken texts, it is natural for the humour authors to consider the readability aspect. This aspect is important because time and energy consumptions that can affect the acceptability and currency of verbal humour are associated with it. The focus of this section is to compare various kinds of literal, scientific and humorous texts and contrast them on the readability scale. In addition, it also seeks to know if different sub-genres of verbal humour exhibit different levels of cognitive challenge that is demonstrable through the readability scale. Therefore, the comparison is among the text types and within the genre of humour.

The expression readability of a text refers to how easily the readers can read and understand the text. Readability of a text depends on intellectual as well as visual factors. The intellectual factors include the subject matter of the text and the choice of words, while the visual factors concern the legibility and typography including the font size, font style and handwriting. Keeping the visual factors neutral, the readability of a text would depend on the subject matter and the choice of words. Arguably, readability of a text affects its appeal and likeliness for repeat and share in case of verbal humour. There are various scales for the assessment of readability of a text. This research employs the following two scales; (a) Fry Readability Graph and (b) Lix Readability Scale.

4.9.1. Fry Readability Graph

Fry (1925-2010) proposed a readability matrix for English in 1963. His readability scale became popular as *Fry Readability Formula* or *Fry Readability Graph* and now applies to all kinds of reading materials. This scale takes the ratio of the number of syllables and number of sentences per hundred words. The graph pictures the readability on an average

hundred-word text wherein one axis represents the number of syllables while the other axis represents the number of sentences. Therefore, the readability of the concerned text is the point of intersection between the sentence curve and the syllable curve. Consider the following:

A → Funny one-liners	E → Verbal jokes
B → Funny definitions	F → Punning riddles
C → Joke cycle	G → Tongue twisters
D → Conversational jokes	H → Fake headlines



Illustration 4.3: Fry readability graph

4.9.2. Lix Readability Scale

Lix is an important reading measurement scale that works computes the total number of words, sentences and long words and measures the readability of a written text. The term ‘long words’, here, refer to words that contain more than six characters. The working of Lix is as follows:

- Step one: Count the total number of long words
- Step two: Divide the total number of long words by the total number of words.
- Step three: Multiply the ratio obtained by 100
- Step four: Divide the total number of words by the total number of sentences
- Step five: Add the values obtained in step three and step four.

Interpretation of the Lix scores

Score	Readability
19 and below	Very easy
20-30	Easy
31-40	Medium
41-50	Difficult
51-60	Very difficult
61 and above	Excessively difficult

Table 4.31: Interpreting Lix readability scale

Consider the following:

A → Funny one-liners	E → Verbal jokes
B → Funny definitions	F → Punning riddles
C → Joke cycle	G → Tongue twisters
D → Conversational jokes	H → Fake headlines

Aspect	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Long words (%)	11.09	22.59	22.67	13.13	14.49	13.75	13.19	25.32
Lexical variety	0.57	0.58	0.56	0.39	0.55	0.44	0.36	0.60
Readability	22.85	31.82	13.98	33.51	28.71	30.06	25.12	39.36

Table 4.32: Applying Lix readability measurement on verbal humour

The above table depicts various forms of verbal humour in relation to the percentage of long words, lexical variety and readability. In the above table, the term ‘Long words (%)’ refers to the percentage of words having more than six letters. Again, the term ‘Lexical variety’ refers to the ratio of unique and repeat words. The percentage of long words and lexical variety are factors that can significantly influence the readability of the text.

The reason for applying two different readability scales is simple. The Fry Readability Measure is popular because its validity is high on various kinds of English texts and it is the only measurement tool that provides the output in the form of graphs. Lix on the other hand is valid for non-English texts and it is applicable to text types suitable for all age groups.

4.10. Summary

Verbal humour is not an extra-ordinary phenomenon. It is part of everyday interaction. And, a systematic analysis of language manipulation in humorous interactions can unearth numerous processes relevant to disambiguation of human speech and interaction. This chapter explored the linguistic mechanisms of verbal humour. At first, it advocated the recognition of verbal humour as a genre that is complete in its own right and then it looked examined the issue of classification of humour in general and verbal humour in particular. A significant point that arose in this chapter is that verbal humour is not a euphemistic synonym for jokes of a distinctive kind. Rather, the term works as an umbrella for a host of humorous phenomena such as puns, riddles, tongue twisters, friendly tease, duels, deft definitions, one-liners, counterfactual headlines etc.

This chapter offered a reclassification of verbal humour and substantiated each category of the new classification with suitable instantiations. Another, important aspect of this chapter is the first hand analysis of the readability of various forms of verbal humour. This chapter utilized the Fry Readability Graph and Lix Readability Scale to study the readability measures of jokes, one-liner, counterfactual headlines, oxymoron etc. Notably, the presence of amusement and degree of funniness in verbal humour heavily depends on the use of language and the manipulations therein. This chapter

identified and explicated how humour may arise due to manipulations and variations at the following levels of language use:

- a) The internal structure of the words, re-spelling and mispronunciation.
- b) The combinatorial aspects of words associating with each other.
- c) The use of pronouns, reference terms and deictic expressions.
- d) Mismatch between form & meaning, polysemous and ambiguous constructs.
- e) Violation of the maxims of conversation.
- f) Calculated delay in articulation and wilful repetitions.
- g) Imitation of style, accent and stereotypes.
- h) Miscommunication due to regional and intercultural differences.
- i) Mismatch between an image and the accompanying text.

The structure of a verbal humour refers to the architectural build-up and plays a vital role in the successful realisation of a text/speech act as an instance of verbal humour. The structure allows such creative manipulation at different levels to create forms that are humorously ambiguous. The role of other factors such as psychology, society, cultural norms etc. is undeniably important, however, if there were ranking of the roles structure would be next to none. The creative variations in the use of language remain a key factor in the production of humorous speech acts at the microscopic and macroscopic levels. The alteration/manipulation at various levels of language is unexceptionable concerning humour production. Apparently, these innovations in language are responsible for arousing the psychological factors and creating the cognitive impacts that are inalienable concerning the comprehension and enjoyment of verbal humour.

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- i The term ‘inherent structure’ or ‘internal structure’ of jokes refers to linguistic as well as conceptual organizations.
 - ii Source: The Faking News accessed on 15/10/2014 at <www.thefakingnews.com>
 - iii Source: Google images accessed on 25/06/2015
 - iv Adapted from Johnstone (2013)
 - v Adapted from Facebook post of Markandey Katju. Originally in Hindi (this version is author’s own translation).
 - vi Source: Dynel (2009: 1293)
 - vii Source: Manjeet Singh in Wah Wah Kya Bat Hai WWKBH Episode number 41
 - viii The authorship of the above piece is contentious. Some scholars attribute it to Mark Twain while others relate it to M. J. Shields.
 - ix Source: www.allthingslinguistics.com
 - x Author’s own translation
 - xi Source: The Faking News accessed on 01/12/2014 at <www.thefakingnews.com>

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- xii Source: Dynel (2009: 19) originally from Pritchett (1992: 12)
- xiii Author's own translation
- xiv Source: Albela Khatri in Wah Wah Kya Bat Hai (WWKBH) episode number 40.
- xv Source: Dialogue from Chashme Baddur, a Bollywood movie.
- xvi Source: Sudeep Bholu in Wah Wah Kya Bat Hai (WWKBH) episode number 40.

Chapter 5

Cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour

5.1. Introduction

Verbal humour is a spectacular achievement of the human mind. It reflects the integrative and intricate performance of several systems that have linguistic, social and psychological antecedents. Arguably, it is a sophisticated and demonstrable manifestation of the human language and cognition working in tandem. This chapter explores the *cognitive mechanisms* of humour.¹ The term cognitive mechanisms in the context of this chapter refer to the logical makeup of humour and psychological processes including the activity of comprehension of humorous stimuli and responding to them. Comprehending and responding to humour in day-to-day interactions is a highly desirable quality in social life. Interestingly, humans acquire this ability during the process of language acquisition and exploit its riches throughout their lives. Everyone acquires it and improves it for reuse. Exposure, training, trial and feedback significantly aid people's ability to use humour and respond to it. However, humour use, including comprehension and response, is not as lucid as it appears at the surface level. It involves numerous complexities and issues that correspond to the cognitive behaviours. The present chapter's focus on the processing of verbal humour implies comprehension, orientation and responding to various sub-classes of verbal humour. The previous chapter focussed on the linguistic mechanisms of verbal humour. Accordingly, it demonstrated the various kinds of manipulation resulting in humour at different levels of language use. It is not hard to accept that verbal humour is, after all, a linguistic phenomenon. However, despite language playing a key role, there is a plenty that takes place at the mental level. Concerning the abstract designs and comprehension of verbal humour, the research needs to look beyond the language at the surface. According to Veale (2004: 1):

“Of course, not all linguistic humour needs this kind of flexibility of processing and integration of cognitive faculties. But, the fact that some kinds do, and draw their humour directly from this power, suggests that to the extent that language is represented at all in a theory of humour, it should be considered from cognitive vantage-point.”

Cognitive Linguistics is one of the most exciting developments of the 20th century. However, it has meant different things to different scholars. The difference of perception could be due to the diverse sources of ideas that have gone into the making of this new paradigm. Geeraerts (2006: 3) makes a distinction between Cognitive Linguistics and cognitive linguistics. According to it, Cognitive Linguistics (having a capital C and a capital L) is an approach to understanding human language; ‘cognitive linguistics’ on the other hand, refers to all such approaches that study language as a mental phenomenon. Therefore, verbal humour is a subject matter of cognitive linguistics. Perhaps it could be something at the cognitive level that two individuals conversing with each other collaboratively produce a speech act that is humorous and successful despite obvious flouting or violations of the phonotactic, morpho-syntactic, semantico-pragmatic and discoursal rules. Since this kind of phenomena is normative behaviour of human interactions, it calls for investigation through the lens of cognitive linguistics. For such an investigation to proceed there are several dimensions to consider. The dimensions are; (a) analyses of cognitive aspects of humorous materials, (b) making predictions about the

cognitive processes necessary for the processing of humorous materials (c) validation of theoretical postulations emerging in the cognitive sciences, (d) correlation between specific types of humorous material and the corresponding cognitive factors relevant to them and (e) substantiation through empirical studies and psycholinguistic experiments.

In the following, the cognitive factors that interact and integrate with humour such as sense of humour, humour quotient, humour orientation, forced reinterpretation, reverse engineering, humour mode, cognitive consistency, cognitive dissonance, load, novelty, etc. will appear in introductory forms. A discussion on the humour measurement tools follows next. After humour measurement tools, this chapter engages with the issues concerning profiling of the participants. It analyses the conventional type-based profiling techniques and presents the case of trait based profiling technique as suitable for humour research. Next, it discusses the empirical and experimental studies that the present research has carried out. Finally, there is a summary of the cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour. The research concerning the cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour focusses on the nature of human interactions. This kind of research needs to address two significant issues, viz. *what kind of linguistic structure* is enjoyable as an instance of humour to people having different kinds of personality dispositions and *how do people* of any particular type *interpret such structures*. The first issue is about the type of verbal humour as well as the type of human beings whereas the second issue is about the invisible and elusive mental operations. This chapter looks at the second issue first. Accordingly, the following section tries to capture various cooperating and at times conflicting ideas about the processing of verbal humour.

5.2. Humour experience and its cognitive correlates

The expression humour experience can refer to production and comprehension of humour. It may also refer to enculturation of taste for specific kinds of humour and formation of habits concerning the employment of humour. Though every individual has his/her own experiences of humour there are some common cognitive factors that interact with them and play a role in the shaping up of humour orientation. This chapter will discuss some cognitive factors in the later sections. However, it is important to understand the contexts in which the term cognitive is valid for the present work. The term cognitive in the context of this research can refer to the following: (a) basic integral capacity and (b) the ability to recognise template.

Basic integral capacity: This capacity comes about without special training; it is present by default or part of general development. It enables an individual to experience humour and amusement of the most fundamental kind. For instance, consider a situation that has an adult making different kinds of facial gestures to an infant and the infant complements these gestures by a smile. The infant smiles because s/he is able to identify an asymmetry between the normal face and the playful distortions of it. This ability is normally present in all humans and its employment is comparable to ‘subitizing’ acts. Subitizing is an ability to tell how many of something in concern is present without counting them individually. In simpler terms, to subitize is to perceive the number of items present just by a glance. The present work calls it basic integral capacity.

Template recognition: This refers to the ability for identification of such humorous instances that match with other humorous instances that the concerned individual had experienced before. In addition, this may also prompt the concerned individual to store it as a recyclable or customizable template. Templates are like formulaic patterns. If one of them occurred in an interaction, the individual knows that it is laughable.

An adult or a competent member of a speech community or an identifiable cultural group normatively possesses both the above qualities. The idea of template recognition maintains that there are finite templates for humour and that humans acquire them when they grow in a speech community and interact with one another. According to this idea the instances of humour follow certain patterns and it is possible to develop an inventory of such patterns. Speech acts involving humour requires humans to access the available patterns or store the newer ones. An individual experiences humour when s/he encounters a speech act that either has the pattern obviously present or that makes the patterns excessively predictable.

The production and comprehension of humour demonstrate the intricate cognitive processes that are essential to the use of humour. This section focuses on the cognitive aspects of the humour experience. Arguably, the ability to create and comprehend humour successfully has some cognitive prerequisites. These prerequisite are similar to the ones necessary for creative thinking and scientific reasoning. Mey (2005: 70) draws similarities between humour comprehension and scientific discoveries.

“... the cognitive prerequisites for comprehension and appreciation of metaphors and other literary devices are identical to those required for comprehension and appreciation of many forms of humour”. Shulz & Robillard (1980: xii)

The cognitive correlates of humour experience include concealment, foregrounding, forced reinterpretation, reverse engineering and figurative thinking (Attardo 2006). However, they all work together to cause incongruity, that lies at the core of cognitive mechanisms of humour instantiations. Gabora (2002) offers explanations for cognitive mechanisms that are inherent in creative processes while most researchers have agreed that humour arises due to the experience of incongruity. In other words, most researchers have regarded incongruity as the root cause behind the experience of funniness in humour phenomena.ⁱⁱ The incongruity based cognitive research on the phenomena of humour has benefitted immensely from the works of Hazlitt (1903), Schopenhauer (1819/1957), Kant (1790/1950). However, treating incongruity as an epiphenomenon and not the root cause of humour, Veale (2004) raises an interesting question.

“It remains a key question for humour researchers as to whether listeners react to incongruities by constructing humorous interpretations, or whether they collaboratively create these incongruities as a result of opportunistically constructing humorous interpretations.” Veale (2004: 1)

The instances of verbal humour involve the use of ambiguous forms and a contradiction between the explicit and the implicit information. The most salient aspect of these instances of verbal humour is that humans not only resolve the ambiguities present in them but also respond to them physically with laughter or verbally with praise or frown.

“Psycholinguistics has developed sophisticated experimental methods in the study of verbal communication, but has not used them to test systematic pragmatic theories.” Sperber & Noveck (2006: 1)

This chapter at first discusses the cognitive correlates of verbal humour and then engages with an empirical study consisting of ten psycholinguistic experiments. The cognitive correlates of verbal humour that are relevant to the objectives of the present research and find space in this chapter include from the following; the sense of humour, humour quotient and humour orientation, forced reinterpretation, reverse engineering, consistency and load, cooperation and counterfactual thinking.

The cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour point to two significant facts. First, each instance of verbal humour possesses a nucleus that nucleus is indispensable because without it the utterance would lose its funniness. Humour researchers prefer to name it punchline or gag line or jabline (Attardo 2001). Second, the human mind processes big chunks of information selectively. That means the human mind focuses on a selective part of a large utterance for processing. Given this, it is important to note that for verbal humour to succeed the mind should minimally identify the nucleus of the humorous utterance.

5.2.1. The sense of humour

Humour is a primordial companion of the human cognitive systems and it overarches the human beings' communicative existence. Humour is a fact of humans' social existence and it is one of the most fundamental attributes of the human-human communication events. However, what is ironic about this primordial and overarching phenomenon of human existence is that its experience is not uniform across the human subjects. Numerous scholars have advocated the view that the ability of perceive and produce humour is a direct outcome of the sense of humour. Brown (2004) provides a number of definitions for sense of humour. A common point in Brown's definitions is that sense of humour refers to ability. According to Eysenck (1972), the expression 'sense of humour' can refer to three different meanings. These meanings apply to human individuals. The first meaning points to people who laugh at common things. Therefore, this meaning is conformist. The second meaning points to the tendency of frequent laughter among some people. Therefore this meaning is quantitative. The third meaning points to performance. It relates to people who enact and perform humorous activities. Therefore, this meaning is performative. It is important to note here that these meanings and the persons they relate to need not be isolatable. Martin (2007) uses the term 'attribution' referring to personality traits of an individual. In that sense it is an attribute that can act as a parameter for comparison between two individuals. Kuipers (2015) claims that there are similarities between what people call sense of humour and humour styles. Some notable facts concerning this expression are as following: sense of humour has remained a highly desirable characteristic of human beings, it is a frequently occurring expression and there is very little scientific research on it.

5.2.2. Revisiting the sense of humour

The term sense of humour acquired prominence in academic research during the final decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century. *The Sense of Humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic* edited by Willibald Ruch (1998 & 2007) is a landmark in humour research because it was for the first time that several prominent experts cutting across disciplines put together their analytical and empirical research in a single volume. This book attracted about 23 contributors specialising in Psychology, Personality, Education, Sociology, Physiology, Psychiatry and Literature. Their contributions focused on intra-individual, inter-individual and group-level differences with respect to humour use and humour appreciation. Another reason that makes Ruch (1998 & 2007) significant is that it assembled contributions that had discussed personality trait based approach.

The expression 'SENSE OF HUMOUR' has received considerable attention in the academic as well as non-academic arenas. Most discussions about the 'sense of humour'

have treated it as a desirable attribute of the personality (Ruch & Hehl 1998 and Ruch 2007). There are two major flaws with this kind of treatment of the concept. First, these discussions have treated the sense of humour as an absolute quality. Second, these discussions have treated this intangible feature as an incommensurable attribute of personality. The effect of the first flaw is that it does not allow one to think that the sense of humour can be a dynamic quality that varies through different conditions. The effect of the second flaw is more obvious than the first. It does not permit one to think whether and how much of this quality an individual may possess. Accordingly, the use of expressions like ‘presence’ or ‘lack’ of sense of humour, ‘high’ or ‘low’ sense of humour prevail in social as well as scientific interactions but they bear little or no scientific correlates. Therefore, it is easy to conclude that our idea about the sense of humour is mostly static and derives from folk etymology. This reassessment seeks to advance the view that sense of humour is a multi-dimensional attribute. It is for this reason that individuals exhibit sense of humour according to their personality types. It is not an absolute category that is either present or absent in an individual. Besides, it is quantifiable through objective parameters. Some scholars prefer to use the term wit to refer to sense of humour.

“Wit – or humor creation – refers to the ability to perceive the incongruous and to express it in quick, sharp, spontaneous, often sarcastic remarks that delight or entertain, either in social interactions or in verbal or graphical communications. This ability to create a comical or funny effect needs to be distinguished from sheer reproduction of memorized humor, and also the talent to perform humorously.” Peterson & Seligman (2004: 591)

The present research advocates that ability to use humour in right quantity, in suitable contexts and in appropriate manner requires humour creativity that is perceivably a sub-type of the general creativity. The humour creativity does not differ from the ‘sense of humour’ in a very significant way. Here, the term ‘humour creativity’ refers to the ability to identify the viewpoints i.e., funny aspects of related and familiar humour as well as unrelated and unfamiliar humour.

5.2.3. Humour quotient and humour orientation

Even though humour is a universal phenomenon, its effect on individuals varies in a considerable way. The diversity in response to humorous stimuli may arise due to the social psychology of the participants. However, contemporary approaches to humour studies and psycholinguistics often treat the experiment participants as absolute categories and the variations in their response as products of socio-cultural factors such as age, sex, literacy and economic background. Barring the intelligence levels of the participants, the role of personality traits in humour appreciation often does not form part of the inquiry. This reduces the reliability of the findings the usual humour experiments claim. While humour quotient refers to the maximally commensurable behaviour, humour orientation refers to the typically predictable behaviour. While humour quotient can have numbers and quantity as its descriptors, humour orientation can have nature and style as its descriptors.

“Humor as an individual difference is apparently associated with a variety of desirable correlates and consequences, although direct comparison of findings is hampered by the use of different measures across studies.” Peterson & Seligman (2004: 592)

A debate relevant to humour orientation of individuals is whether the ability to produce and comprehend humour is a general cognitive disposition of the humans or it is modality specific. In other words, do humans show preference for the medium in which humour comes, as they prefer certain types of humour to the others? Accordingly, an individual x may prefer ‘verbal’ to ‘visual’ for the type of humour s/he likes.

It is also important to distinguish between ‘common sense’ and ‘humour quotient’. Quiet often in general parlance and sometimes in academic discussion the term ‘common sense’ acts synonymous to humour or humour quotient. This distinction is necessary because common sense is about something that everyone or most of the people know and agree to whereas humorous phenomena vary across people and accordingly the availability of humour quotient varies across population (Plester 2016). In other words, humour contradicts what is common sense about a phenomenon. Demonstrably, common sense and humour quotient are parasitic on each other.

An issue concerning the humour orientation is its onset in individuals. When does the humour orientation take place? There cannot be a straight answer to this question. Numerous studies have informed about the onset of humour and laughter in individuals but perhaps none discussed about its orientation in them. An assumption that appears acceptable at present is that it takes place only after the individuals develop working proficiency in the language and are able to play with the rules of phonology and grammar as well as maxims of conversation. Therefore, the above question cannot have its answer in numerals representing years and months. Instead, it appears acceptable to say that humour orientation in itself sets some prerequisites such as the ability to perceive incongruity and cultural norms. Only when prerequisites like the ability to understand figurative language use appears in individuals, one can say that the humour orientation would start to develop.

5.2.4. Forced reinterpretation and reverse engineering

Verbal humour and its sub-classes such as jokes, puns, parody, satire and spoof are amazing products of language and the human mind. The knack to use them astutely is highly desirable and it is an intellectual milestone achievable in an individual’s life (Khan 2014). They are such components of entertainment discourse that also carry disseminating socio-political ideas. The sociolinguistic aspects apart, they are exemplary substances for research in Linguistics because they involve phonological, graphological, lexical and structural manipulations on the one hand and forced reinterpretation and reverse engineering on the other. Arguably, very little research has taken place with these perspectives. Forced reinterpretation and collaborative humour point to some significant cognitive aspects of humour use. Consider (i) and (ii) given below:

- (i) [Said by an old man] I still have sex at 74.
I live at house number 75, so it’s no distance for me.

Veale (2004: 3) analyses the above in the following manner:

“The punchline creates a need to reconcile a house number with what appears at first to be an age, but which can only sensibly be another house number. The listener, who is unaware of the ambiguity at first, is thus forced to back-track and recreates an alternate mapping between the surface and deep levels of the narrative.”

- (ii) Women are always using me to advance their careers.
Damned anthropologists!

Veale's (2004: 3) view regarding interpretation to forced reinterpretation in this kind of verbal humour is as follows:

“The set-up suggests two facts that nicely serve to flatter the speaker: firstly, he appears to occupy a position of some power in his little world; secondly, he clearly does not want sexual attention. The punch-line, however, pitilessly shatters these illusions; the speaker is not a powerful sexual magnet after all, but a subject of study for female anthropologists who wish to profit academically from his implied primitiveness.”

Forced reinterpretation and reverse engineering are identical ideas that cognitive linguists have advanced during the final decades of the 20th century. There are two dimensions to these ideas. First, a widely spread and acceptable idea prevails about the issue. Second, the humorous effect arises when the author proposes a different but perceptible and agreeable idea. The new idea is not only radically different but also supersedes the previously existing idea. The issues in discussion here are from very diverse domains of life. It is appropriate to assume that forced reinterpretation and reverse engineering are clever techniques that require innovative thinking and logical understanding. Khan (2014) has demonstrated that forced reinterpretation and reverse engineering are cognitive tools that one can employ coercively and draw socio-political mileage from that.

5.2.5. Cooperation? Or, shared understanding? Or, special disposition?

The occurrence of verbal humour in social interactions requires collaborative efforts of at least two parties. The two parties can exist at the intra-personal, inter-personal and social levels. Of the two, one party initiates the humorous interaction, deceiving/misleading the other by concealing information or foregrounding stereotypes or wordplays. Humour is a cooperative exercise. Typically, joking texts necessitate reciprocal relationship between the broadcaster who is usually a joke teller or writer and the viewer that is recipient. Not only the organization and relay of verbal humour but the transmission and effect of it considerably depends on a kind of understanding prevailing commonly among the interlocutors within an interaction. One can say that social groups and speech communities across the world decide norms for the use of humour and individuals imbibe these norms while they are acquiring language. This serves as an element of their encyclopaedic knowledge. The violation of these norms by joke tellers or the absence of such knowledge on part of the receivers would fail to cause amusement and funniness even from structurally and conceptually most hilarious of the jokes. Obviously, the assumption that the success of humour instantiations depends on shared understanding stands true even though the perception about humour in good/bad taste varies at the levels of individuals and groups.

5.2.6. Funny? Or, interesting? Or, pleasing?

Humour research, especially the ones focussing on response to humorous stimuli, employ the following three terms synonymously: (a) Funny (b) Interesting and (c) Pleasing. The present research prefers the term 'Funny' over 'Interesting' and 'Pleasing' because funniness serves as the defining characteristics of humorous phenomena. In actual use, the instances of verbal humour may be funny but not pleasing and interesting, may be pleasing but not funny and interesting, and may be interesting but not funny and pleasing. The instances of sick humour, bad humour and failed humour provide numerous instances

when the instance of humour is funny but not pleasing or interesting but not pleasing. A question pertinent to the judgement about funny, interesting and pleasing is who decides whether and how much an instance is funny or interesting or pleasing. Concerning this, it is important to take into account the socio-cultural context that would act as parameters for evaluating the instance of humour.

5.2.7. Cognitive ease or cognitive load?

Since ambiguity in structure and plurality of interpretation are inherently present in their architecture, every instance of verbal humour presents a cognitive challenge. This challenge is quite visible when a reader or listener has to interpret a piece of humorous or scientific text. A natural query concerning the cognitive challenge associated with verbal humour is as follows: Do various instances of verbal humour pose additional load to the cognitive system or they are easier to process than usual language tasks? Putting this in different words, how would humorous texts fare on the readability criterion? Readability mainly concerns interpretability of a text that can appear in oral or written mode. A text scoring high on readability naturally poses lesser cognitive challenge than those scoring less on the same scale. The previous chapter reported the readability variations across different sub-genres of verbal humour.

Concerning various forms of verbal humour, it is evident that it is difficult to establish the effect of ease or load on the experience of funniness (Samson 2008). It appears that some forms like riddles, one-liners and tongue twisters usually enhance the cognitive load while others contribute to the cognitive ease. However, they both may remain humorous. An easy conclusion that one can draw from this dichotomous behaviour is that cognitive ease or cognitive load alone cannot affect the experience of funniness. Cognitive ease and load are themselves products of personality orientation and familiarity with certain types of verbal humour. They also vary through different sub-genres. In that case, it is also logical to conclude that ease and load are cognitive factors that can influence the experience of funniness of humorous instantiations. However, the degree to which they would affect the funniness depends on various incommensurable aspects.

5.2.8. Absurdity and foolishness? Or non-sequitur and false logic?

A significant proportion of verbal humour rests on absurdity and foolishness. Both absurdity and foolishness are self-explanatory requiring no elaboration. An important reason behind the profound display of absurdity and foolishness in humorous phenomena is that they are ready to use tools. From the sociological angle, absurdity and foolishness offer an opportunity to demonstrate the absence of power equilibrium. In aesthetics terms, the foolish and absurd acts in humorous phenomena are pleasing because they are highly (de)familiarising. From the linguistic perspective, absurdity and foolishness show the violations of conversational maxims.

The cognitive counterpart of such acts is the counterfactual thinking. Therefore, verbal humour involving foolishness and absurdities provide the opportunity to express the unexpected, banned, profane and unimaginable. That is why they are available in plenty, especially in wits, funny one-liners, deft definitions and wise quotes.

Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Non-sequitur humour	False logic humour
i	Basically, all generalisations are false.	People died of cancer even before the invention of cigarettes. Therefore, smoking does not cause cancer.
ii	<u>The following statement is false</u> The above statement is true	Bats are mammals. And, bats can fly. Dogs are mammals too. Therefore, dogs can fly.
iii	<u>The following statement is true</u> The above statement is false	Do not break people's heart, they have only one. Break their bones, they have two hundred and six.

Table 5.1a: Instances of non-sequitur and false logic

It is obvious that absurdity and foolishness abound the set of humour because they manifest the socio-cultural aspects of verbal humour. However, there are cognitive strategies applicable in all instances of humour relying on absurdity and foolishness (Samson 2008). These strategies include the application of non sequitur and false logic. The term non sequitur refers to a conclusion that does not correspond to the premises whereas the term false logic in this context refers to logic that is incongruous to the common sense. The non sequitur and false logic have served as a constant source of funny humorous. Both these cognitive strategies temporarily or permanently and locally or globally enhance the plausibility of an explanation that would appear hilarious. Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Instances of false logic
i	Teacher student conversation Teacher: When is your birthday? Student: On 26 th January. Teacher: You are lying. It is not possible. Student: Why do you say so, sir? Teacher: Because. 26 th January is our Republic Day. It is a national holiday.
ii	Doctor patient conversation Patient: Doctor, I often experience pain in my legs. Doctor: Walk as much as you can for a month and then call me. The patient called the doctor from Mumbai and reported Doctor, walking from Hyderabad I have reached Mumbai. How much should I walk more?
iii	A young girl informs her mother that while she was playing in the garden a man asked her to climb the tree. The mother was surprised and cautioned her that the man might be a pervert interested in seeing her undergarment when she was up on the tree. The young girl happily replied "I guess so, that is why I took it off before climbing the tree."

Table 5.1b: Instances of false logic

5.2.9. Coalescence of implicit, unsaid, masked and concealed

Concealment and foregrounding are cognitive tools that are relevant in humorous conversations in general and conversational jokes in particular. Arguably, there is little debate on the involvement of concealment and foregrounding of information in humorous situations. From the narrative perspective, the concealment and foregrounding are complementary to each other and occur at a strategically significant place in the text. The quantity and span of concealment and foregrounding vary from text to text. In this perspective Brône & Feyaerts (2003) is a commendable work that raises the following questions:

- a) What is the role of the unsaid in humor?
- b) What is the influence of the complexity of the resolution process on humor appreciation?

The corpus of verbal humour indicates that there are several instances of humour use where the intended meaning is not very explicit. In fact, the unsaid and implicit nature of the text contributes to ambiguity in such texts and enhances funniness in them. The notable aspect of such instances of humour is that they do not speak, they only hint or indicate. For issues that are likely to cause outrage and attract negative response it is safe for the humour broadcaster to adopt the indicative style. Consider the following example:

Sl. No.	Humour in concealed forms
i	Fruits are having conversation on what they look like. A conversation among fruits and vegetables Broccoli: My look resembles a tree. Mushroom: I look like an umbrella. Walnut: I resemble the brain. Banana: Can we please change the topic?
iii	A girl interested in getting a tattoo on her legs visits a tattoo maker. She asks him the price for tattoos. He replies, if you choose to make an ant the price would be ₹200, if you choose a lion tattoo I would charge ₹100. The giraffe tattoo is free of course.

Table 5.2: Humour in concealed forms

It is easy to notice that in these instances of verbal humour the implicit and the unsaid contribute to funniness. There is concealment and masking of intentions and ideas. A widely prevalent way of masking is the use of metaphors. Thereby masking either personifies a non-living thing or animalizes the human beings. There are two objectives of this kind of interactions: (a) Masking or concealment for in-group interactions and (b) Masking or concealment for general interactions. In the first case, the concealment is to ensure that the access to the intended meaning does not go beyond the group members. If the meaning reaches the individuals beyond the group, there is a possibility of retreat and disapproval. It remains funny only as long as the meaning is limited to the in-group members. In the second masking or concealment has an important social role. Here, the objective is to indirectly refer to objects or processes talking about which would appear unfashionable or obscene. The most important point about this kind of humour is that

their surface meaning and literal interpretations act as safety valve for metaphoric reference to the objectionable topics.

5.2.10. Blending the familiar and the novel

The familiarity with a joke or the joke-type poses a tricky problem for the humour theory. Often the scholars have cited that humour arises due to unfamiliarity with the context. Veale (1996: 130) claims that in humorous instantiations the familiar appears strange and vice versa. This idea looks perfectly fit in the realm of surprise-disambiguation model, however, in the social disparagement model the situation is completely reverse. This could explain why new jokes cause more amusement than the repeatedly occurring ones. It appears that humour succeeds because it throws newer contexts and thereby exploits the listeners'/viewers' unfamiliarity with the context. Gabora (2002) argues that creativity underlies the shift from association-based to causation based thinking and divides the creative process into the following four stages:

- a) Preparation stage: this stage is responsible for preliminary work such collection of relevant data, tentative solutions and initial attempts at solving the problem.
- b) Incubation stage: there is no demonstrable action in this stage but the idea continues to grow consciously or unconsciously.
- c) Illumination stage: this stage sees the development of theoretical aspects, logic and reasons concerning the idea.
- d) Verification stage: in this stage the idea acquires a demonstrable form.

According to Peterson & Seligman,

“As an individual difference, creativity entails two essential components. First, a creative person must produce ideas or behaviors that are recognizably original – novel, surprising, or unusual. However, originality per se does not define creativity. The relevant behaviors or ideas must also be adaptive.”
Peterson & Seligman (2004: 95)

If this is true, the following question becomes difficult to explain: Why do speech communities exhibit social stereotypes when they use jokes about members of their community or some other communities? In any geo-physical settings, there are more jokes about one cultural group and relatively less about others. The above problem ceases to exist if one takes into consideration the case of joke-cycles. Joke cycles are para-jokes that mostly focus on an individual person/place/thing and the humour arises because the contributors of this kind of cycle typify, exaggerate or overextend certain behaviour adopted by the concerned. It is difficult to decide whether familiarity contributes or hinders the experience of amusement in a joke. The above examples necessitate some familiarity with the issue at hand but they sustain the hilarious aspects because of structural and conceptual factors. From the psycholinguistic as well as socio-cultural perspectives, familiarity is a prerequisite. However, psycholinguistic and socio-cultural factors set relatively different familiarity conditions. From the psycholinguistic perspective, it is the awareness of the conceptual aspects, the scheme of the joke that should be familiar. In contrast, from the socio-cultural standpoint, the manifestations of various facets of the human culture should be familiar. The former requires familiarity with a kind of mental activity whereas the latter requires familiarity with socio-cultural and ethnic stereotypes. The former is productive in nature i.e. once familiar one can easily

identify or even replicate the humour. The latter is highly contextual may require socio-cultural and political considerations.

The response that jokes evoke has conversational as well as behavioural connotations. The behavioural and affective aspects are significant to the pedagogical situations and team works. The conversational aspect of the jokes includes the rating based on the experience of funniness, identification of the jabline/punchline and interpretation of the incongruous aspects of the information sets available in the jokes.

5.2.11. Humour mode as a cognitive prerequisite

The use of humour in itself requires a mode. One has to be in joking mode to say/write a joke. It requires no illustration to prove the point that the mere presence of humour in conversation would not make it humorous. Even if it takes care of the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the humour use in interactions, the experience of funniness may remain elusive. This means that there is a desirable mode for the relay and transmission of humour. The structural and conceptual aspects may render the essential ingredients to a piece of verbal humour. However, it may still fail to amuse the recipients. Often it has happened that even the best of the comic performances have failed to evoke laughter among the viewers.

Contrastively, on numerous counts people start experiencing amusement and expressing laughter with the mere mention of a person or event that guarantees something laughable. It is interesting to note here that in all such cases the relay and actual instantiation of humour is yet to begin. Then, how is it that the recipients respond with laughter to an instance of verbal humour that has not taken place? It is in this context, the Humour Mode acquires significance.ⁱⁱⁱ The term 'Humour Mode' (HM) refers to the socio-psychological state in which the broadcast of humour is likely to happen. The mental awareness that something funny is going to come on part of the recipients makes them laugh. The laughter on their part signifies their preparedness for laughable acts and confirms that they are able to link with previous experiences of that kind. Since, humour is a cooperative action it is important for the recipients to get into the HM to be able to enjoy the act in its entirety and respond to it positively. It is this mode that causes expectations of funny acts among the recipients and gears them up for the challenge of comprehending and responding to humour. For instance, consider the Santa-Banta jokes in the Indian context. The very mention of these fictitious characters evokes laughter. The same is true of certain cinema characters and comedians. Most often, their appearance itself is enough to ignite laughter among the viewers. In case of joke cycles too, one reason for their success with causing the experience of funniness is that the readers/viewers are already prepared to enjoy them. Thus, HM is significant from the perspective of humour comprehension. Since HM indicates a psychological state and causes the expectation of funniness among the recipients, it is plausible that HM has an enabling role in the performance of humour quotient and humour orientation in individuals.

A simple way to understand the working HM is to imagine two contrary situations both of which contain humorous acts of similar kind. The assumption here is that the awareness that humour is on way will cause the recipients to channelize all mental energy towards the resolution of ambiguity and incongruity lying in the act. If the humorous act necessitates some additional mental operations, the psychological awareness in the form HM would prove to be an enabler.

5.2.12. Cognitive consistency and cognitive dissonance

The cognitive mechanisms, including the coercive techniques form an indispensable feature of verbal humour. From the cognitive linguistic standpoint, most instances of verbal humour involve cognitive consistency and cognitive dissonance. Marlich (2007) and Cooper & Goren (2007) present an overview of the concepts ‘cognitive consistency’ and ‘cognitive dissonance’ respectively. According to Marlich (2007: 148) “cognitive consistency is one of the earliest concepts associated with social psychology.” He uses the term ‘cognitive’ in its usual sense that relates to thoughts and attitude. In addition, by ‘consistency’, he refers to the balance and symmetry across cognitions. Therefore, combined together the expression ‘cognitive consistency’ refers to a harmonious state of mind. In this state, there is no conflict of ideas & intentions and an individual’s behaviour is in harmony with his/her beliefs. Marlich (ibid.) recommends the use of ‘cognitive consistency’ as a tool to understand social psychology explain the diverse aspects of human behaviour. In contrast, cognitive dissonance is an unpleasant emotion and causes disharmony of the mental states. Cognitive dissonance according to Cooper & Goren (2007) is the aversive state of arousal that occurs when a person holds two or more cognitions that are inconsistent with each other.

Given that pleasant is desirable whereas unpleasant is undesirable, most research converge on the following; humans in their day-to-day interaction expect the pleasant and their response to that would be normal whereas the onset or overdose of the unpleasant would adversely affect their response to the communicative event. If this were the fact then what could be the reason for normal joking situations?

They mostly utilize simultaneous portrayal of two ideas that are humorous but not real. On some occasions, the funny one-liners and humorous headlines open up with a real event and latter insert an imaginary idea into it. While on other counts, they open up an imaginary idea and accommodate the real event into it. Their success lies in the fact that they do it with extra-ordinary precision. The planting of real and imaginary events causes a momentary cognitive dissonance in the viewers. They strike the right balance by assisting the viewers to reach back to cognitive consistency.

This sections, intends to project an important view that might contradict, at least at the surface level, the most prevalent views about verbal humour. Humour is not just about manipulations and misunderstandings. On a larger level, it is about co-operations and co-constructions. An instance of humour is highly successful when the parties involved co-operate or co-construct the humorous act.

5.2.13. Counterfactual thinking and response to humour

The term ‘counterfactual thinking’ refers to psychological activities in which individuals constructs alternatives to the actual events that took place. It differs from imagination or fantasies because it involves alteration to what has already happened. When human beings involve in counterfactual thinking, they mentally undo some factual events and simulate alternative events. As this kind of thinking is universal, scholars from disciplines like philosophy, linguistics, artificial intelligence, psychology, economics etc., have pursued it. Their reactions too vary as much as their affiliating disciplines. While some scholars link counterfactual thinking with the feeling of regret, others maintain that it helps individuals cope up with negative and unfavourable situations that might have occurred to them and prepare for those likely to happen in future. Therefore, counterfactual thinking is not always counter-productive. However, the inclusion of

‘counterfactual thinking’ in this section is not to elaborate on the psychology of counterfactual thinking but to explicate how humour engages with counterfactual thinking. The phenomena of verbal humour make extensive use of counterfactual thinking and imaginary situations. Here, the use of the term counterfactual thinking implies unreal facts and exaggerations. Concerning this, a sub-set of jokes may qualify as counterfactual jokes. The formal description of such a joke is as following:

x is so y that z

where x can be a natural object, human being, process or phenomenon

y is a desirable or undesirable attribute

z is an impossible thing under normal circumstances

Counterfactuals can occur in verbal humour in set-up as well as resolution stage. If they occur in the beginning, they build an ephemeral uneasiness. The punchlines/resolutions chase away this uneasiness and tension resulting in the experience of funniness and relief at the end. In certain cases of verbal humour, counterfactuals play a salient role irrespective of their position. Consider for instance funny one-liners and humorous headlines. The use of counterfactuals in the beginning of these instances of verbal humour heightens the emotions of the viewers. Thereby it exploits the causal primacy effect of the counterfactual thinking. However, the use of counterfactuals in the end of them explicates their persuasiveness and coercive reinterpretations. Contrastively, this exploits the temporal order effect of the counterfactual thinking.

All instances of verbal humour reflect the linguistic and cognitive propensities of human beings as creative communicators. At the level of basic structure, jokes and puns are creative. However, the degree of creativity in them depends on the structural complexities, improvisation and reusability. From the psycholinguistic viewpoint the humour use, including its planning, construction, execution and response to it, is an activity that happens very fast. That is why it appears to be spontaneous. As far as the response is concerned, one can say that it is spontaneous but the overall use is not so spontaneous. Martin considers the humour use a spontaneous activity.

“It is assumed that people tend to engage in humor quite spontaneously and often unaware of its social or psychological functions in a given situation.”

Martin (2007: 211)

Martin’s claim here is problematic. More often than not people train themselves for the kind of humour they would be using during interactions with people they come across. Even when people react to humorous stimuli, they are aware of its social and psychological aspects as well as their response to it. If Martin were true, there would not have been any classification of jokes, there would not be appropriateness or quantity issues, there would not be any stereotypes in humour, there would not be individual differences for humour preference and there would not be need for a comprehensive theory. In contrast, the present research proves that people’s engagement in humorous acts is not as spontaneous as it appears on the surface level. There are socio-psychological considerations that people are aware of when they involve in humorous acts. All of them work very swiftly and in an integrative manner.

5.3. Humour measurement scales

The final decades of the twentieth century have seen a spurt of publications on measurement of humorous contents in a text and the degree to which a person can create

or appreciate humour. This was a new trend in humour studies aiming at quantification with one perceptible objective; and that is comparison between texts and between individuals. A powerful assumption resting with the humour researchers is that the amount of humour content in two distinct texts will certainly vary. This assumption applies to humans too. Therefore, the humour need and response to humorous stimuli will vary intra-individually as well as inter-individually. In order to compare, assess, diagnose or predict the humour content of texts and humour behaviour of humans need numerical coefficient; and that is why humour measurement.

“Throughout the 20th century there were numerous attempts to develop measures of sense of humor and related states and traits. Typically, these were face-valid self-report questionnaires or joke or cartoon tests, but occasionally methods like humor diaries, informant questionnaires and peer report, behavioral observations, experimental tasks,, interviews, and surveys were used.” Paterson & Seligman (2004: 587)

Consequently, a number of tests emerged for the assessment and gradation of the sense of humour in individuals. Paterson & Seligman (2004: 589-90) presents some measures of humour available for use. R. A. Martin and Lefcourt proposed ‘Coping Humor Scale’ (CHS) and ‘Situational Humor Response Questionnaire’ (SHRQ), the first two scales that are relevant to humour mapping. The CHS appeared in 1983. It assumes that people use humour in dreadful situations to cope with stress. The SHRQ appeared in 1984 and focused on the sense of humour. According to it, sense of humour is the frequency with which a person expresses the experience of humour. For instance, by smiling, laughing etc. The ‘Humor Styles Questionnaire’ (HSQ) studies the social and psychological aspects of humour response in individuals. R.A. Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir developed it in 2003. This test focusses on four functions of humour. Lampert Craik and Nelson proposed ‘Humorous Behaviour Q-Sort Deck’ in 1996. This instrument studies the everyday humorous conduct of the participants. Focussing on personality temperament in jokes and cartoons Wilibald Ruch introduced the 3 WD Test of Humor Appreciation in 1992. Harvey Mindess et al developed the ‘Anticoch Sense of Humor Inventory’ (ASHI – Part I). This thirty minute humour measurement tool that first appeared in a book form uses the five-point Likert like scale and measures ten different types of humour. It is suitable for all. A notable point about this scale is that it does not have very high correlation with the 16 PF. The ‘Humor Cognition Test’ (HCT) owes its origin to Alan Feingold and Ronald Mazzella. HCT is a fifteen-minute long test consisting of joke completion subtests.

The humour measurement scales have appeared at regular intervals of approximately ten years. It is evident that their use largely depends on their applicability and availability.

Besides, applicability and availability the factors salient to the scales of humour include the following:

- a) category of the humour that it can test,
- b) the total number of items,
- c) expected time required to complete the tasks,
- d) primary focus of the test, and
- e) compatibility with other scales.

5.3.1. Individual variations and participants' profiling

Even though humour is a universal phenomenon, its effect on individuals varies in a considerable way (Samson 2008). The response to humorous stimuli in interpersonal varies so much that often scholars assume that it is difficult to study the response as it varies from person to person and situation to situation. In the first decade of the 21st century, scholars such as Ruch (2004, 2008 & 2010) and Proyer (2009) & Platt (2012) have attempted to study these individual differences and draw generalizations.

“... Why is it that somebody finds a joke absolutely hilarious, the next considers it boring and still another one embarrassing? Many studies have set out to investigate the questions of "what is funny to whom and why" and enriched our understanding of both humor and personality.” (Proyer & Ruch 2010: 49)

The diversity in response to humorous stimuli arises for a number of reasons such as orientation towards the inter-personal relationship and humour. However, contemporary approaches to humour studies and psycholinguistics often treat the experiment participants as absolute categories and the variations in their response as products of socio-cultural factors such as age, sex, literacy and economic background. The examination of the role socio-psychological factors play in humour appreciation does surpass the intelligence levels of the participants. In other words, a highly enigmatic and under-explored issue in Linguistics and Humour Studies is the classification / categorisation of the participants of experiments. A critical evaluation of the participants, whose data the experimenters sample for drawing inferences, would reveal that the informants inherently come under some kind of stereotype pairs of class such as men and women, children and adults, literate and illiterate, rich and poor, native and foreign, intelligent and stupid so on and so forth. This kind of classification is obsessed with absolute categories and depends heavily on social constructs, factors that do not affect the phenomenon to the degree they should. Therefore, there is a need for more objective criterion for judgement / scaling / ranking. The present research is a critique of absolute type classifications and it offers a traits-based classification, an alternative that relies on basic human needs, personality traits and their orientation towards humour. Humour orientation in the purview of this thesis is a factor that can greatly influence an individual's interpersonal interaction and the humour contents in it.

5.3.2. Problems with traditional profiling

The traditional profiling of subjects / participants in experimental studies in psycholinguistics has often reflects an extreme obsession for absolute categories, social constructs and stereotypes. The terms ‘absolute categories’ or social construct and stereotypes refer to categories such as humans and non-humans, men and women, children and adults, rich and poor, native and alien so on and so forth. McGarty (1999) maintains that;

“The social cognitive literature on categorization can be seen to be organized around the following three principles: (a) categorization involves biased stimulus processing, (b) categorization involves the activation of previously stored constructs, and (c) categorization is constrained by motivational and evaluative concerns.” McGarty (1999: 82)

Keeping in mind the natural phenomena such as language use, humour and gelotophobia these classifications look highly superficial, for they accord an over emphasis on socio-cultural, ethnic and political identities and ignore the variations existing within them. A problem with such methodology is that it regards the participants as true and absolute representatives of the concerned class. Yet another problem with this methodology is that it reflects significant dependence on the statistical correlates. Since it does not account for the internal variations, i.e. the variation at the level of individuals the data arrived at cannot be trusted. Thus, there has always been a need for more reliable parameters. The present research employs a different parameter that can help in the classification of the participants in such a way that the internal variations become available for sampling and analysis. With the traditional classification not able to cater to the specific needs, the psycholinguistic research is in a constant need for alternative means of classification of the participants.

5.3.3. The scheme of Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Behaviour Orientation (FIRO-B) scale.

Featuring in over two million assessments every year and adopted by eighty-nine of Fortune hundred companies, the FIRO-B instrument is one of the most popular personality assessment tools available today.^{iv} FIRO-B concentrates on inclusion, control and affection in the test takers. William Schutz developed this tool in 1958 to observe behaviour in personal, interpersonal and social situations.^v This self-report instrument provides information about the *wanted* and *expressed* behaviour in the following three basic social needs of personality; *inclusion, control* and *affection*. Any individual can take this introspective test provided s/he understands simple sentences like the following; (a) I try to be with people, (b) I let others decide what to do and (c) I like people to act close towards me. For such sentences, the participants have a set of fifty-four items and six options against each item. They can choose from the following words; Usually, Often, Sometimes, Occasionally, Rarely and Never. No answer is right or wrong. For each relevant choice, the test-taker gets one point. However, the scores for a particular aspect, for instance inclusion ranges between 0-9.^{vi} An important aspect of this test is personality classification into the following types:

	High	Mid	Low
	Inclusion	Inclusion	Inclusion
Expressed			
Wanted			
	Control	Control	Control
Expressed			
Wanted			
	Affection	Affection	Affection
Expressed			
Wanted			

Table 5.3a: FIRO-B classification

The term ‘Expressed’ here refers to those traits that an individual habitually maintains during interpersonal interactions while the term ‘Wanted’ here refer to such traits which exist and influence the person’s behaviour but may or may not be visibly present. The blank cells can have numbers ranging between 0-9 where low score means weak traits, moderate score means average traits and high score means marked traits. These traits are

highly noticeable as they correspond to decision making and behaviour on day-to-day basis. The following illustration provides a better idea about the traits pertinent to individual aspects mentioned above.

Inclusion	Association, Interaction, Distinction, Prominence, Attention, Involvement, Contact, Belonging
Control	Power, Authority, Influence, Responsibility, Leadership, Consistence, Decisiveness, Dominance, Competitiveness
Affection	Being personal, Closeness, Openness, Supportiveness, Being affirmed, Warmth, Empathy, Encouragement, Appreciativeness

Table 5.3b: Personality traits' description.^{vii}

Interpretation: For any given aspect under observation, the score ranges between the extremes of zero and nine. The following table provides in details the break of score for the interpretation of FIRO-B results. This score is just an indicator of the presence versus absence of the traits; it is not the complete personality profile of an individual. In addition, the scores may vary depending upon the conditions in which the individual takes the test. However, this does not reduce the predictability of behavioural features in the individual.

Score	Classification	Effect
0 or 1	Very low	rarely noticeably traits
2 or 3	Low	not easily noticeable traits
4 or 5	Fuzzy/moderate	neither strong nor weak traits
6 or 7	High	noticeable traits
8 or 9	Very high	strongly noticeable traits

Table 5.3c: FIRO-B scores

With respect to the interpretation of FIRO-B scores, it is important to consider the distinct traits in individuals' personality and their compatibility and incompatibility with other individuals' personality traits:

Distinct traits	Compatible with
High inclusion expressed	Low inclusion expressed
Low inclusion expressed	High inclusion expressed
High control expressed	Low control expressed
Low control expressed	High control expressed
High affection expressed	Low affection expressed
Low affection expressed	High affection expressed
High inclusion expressed	Low control expressed
Low inclusion expressed	Low control expressed

Table 5.4a: Traits' compatibility

Distinct traits	Incompatible with
High inclusion expressed	High inclusion expressed
Low inclusion expressed	Low inclusion expressed

High control expressed	High control expressed
Low control expressed	Low control expressed
High affection expressed	High affection expressed
Low affection expressed	Low affection expressed
High inclusion expressed	High control expressed
Low inclusion expressed	High control expressed

Table 5.4b: Traits' incompatibility

Limitations: The FIRO-B instrument permits the experimenters to arrive at a significantly large number of classifications of human personality. However, this study has explored the extreme cases of the following four pairs: high/low inclusion expressed, high/low control expressed, high/low inclusion wanted and high/low control wanted. It is beyond the scope of the current research to report the behaviour of other personality traits in contexts such as gelotophobia, gelotophilia, ketagelasticism, visual-verbal humour, tongue twisters, etc.

5.3.4. The scheme of Jokes and I (JaI) scale

The Jokes and I (hereafter JaI) is new measurement scale developed by Tariq Khan in 2015. JaI is Likert-type scaling technique. The Likert scale is a psychometric response scale named after Rensis Likert. The Likert-type scales are highly useful in measurement of test takers' attitudes and orientation towards the topic of interest. Such scales permit five, seven or nine of responses to choose for a particular question item. Other scales similar to the Likert scale are Thurstone Scale and Guttman Scale. In a Likert scale, it is easy to construct the items, the participants find it convenient to respond to the questions and scores are quite reliable. An advantage of this format of scaling is that it allows the researchers to analyse each item separately as well as collectively.

The central belief of JaI scale developed for this research is that human beings like or dislike verbal humour according to their orientation towards jokes. Accordingly, every person has a certain kind of orientation towards jokes that is comparable to the lateralization of brain activities. This test tries to find out humour orientation of test takers. It is the first of its kind, has a simple design and is easy to administer. It is explorative, so there is no right or wrong answer in it. In addition, the scope for interference is negligible unless the participants provide false responses. According to the response to test questionnaire an individual can belong to one of the following groups: (a) Super incline, (b) Inclined, (c) Sub-inclined, (d) Uninclined, and (e) Antagonistic.

Since JaI scale is mostly exploratory, it honours variations over time, place and situations. Therefore, the argument that an individual's preferences can change over time remains valid in this measurement. For the same reasons, the characterisation of the participants in JaI scale is non-deterministic. However, the characteristics that it assigns to particular classes of individuals are deterministic. Therefore, it is possible for a particular individual to fall under one class when s/he takes the test for the first time and some other class when s/he takes after a year or so. What gives strength to this scale is the fact that neither it classifies the participants in advance nor it makes any future predictions for the individuals. It only reflects upon the response in specific conditions. JaI is in harmony with the FIRO-B instrument that the present research employs for profiling the test takers.^{viii}

5.4. Empirical Studies on verbal humour

The empirical studies on humour have involved interviews, surveys and experiments in various forms. These studies adopt a set of tasks that help in understanding the nature and behaviour of the phenomenon under investigation. Among the tasks rating, ranking, identification of punchline and completion of sentences bearing humorous stimuli are most prominent. The present research has made use of all the four. A short description to each one of them is available below followed by a general note on the utilizable materials for the empirical studies on humour. That follows a description of how the present set of experiments has kept the confounding factors away. The final topic in this section is a summary of the pilot study. Concerning task, humour experiments mostly ask the participants to carry out one or two from the following tasks:

- a) To decide whether a stimulus is funny or not
- b) To recognise whether a stimulus is an instance of humour or not
- c) To rate the degree of funniness on a scale
- d) To locate punchline or jabline in a joke.
- e) To identify whether the humorous stimulus is recyclable or not
- f) To compare a humorous stimulus with some other stimulus for similarities
- g) To rank a set of humorous stimuli in ascending or descending order of funniness

5.4.1. Rating tasks

Most humour experiments involve rating tasks. In these tasks, the test taker reads, listens to or watches the stimuli and grades them on funniness. The use of rating tasks for humour experiments offers a number of advantages. They are optimally suggestive. Since rating tasks do not throw \pm binary features, the test takers do not experience any compulsion to choose their response from either of the options available. Therefore, one advantage of using them in experiments is that the test takers have a range of options to record their response. Since rating tasks do not require the test takers to provide elaborate details, one of the challenges in using these tasks is to ensure that the test takers do not respond whimsically. This is achievable through careful designing of the test materials including the items and fillers.

5.4.2. Ranking tasks

The ranking tasks present sets of items that vary in their structures and humour contents. The test takers need to arrange the items in sets in either increasing or decreasing order of funniness. For the participants the items may appear as mere laughable contents, however, for the experimenter the items in each set correspond to different variables that are relevant to the research. The ranking task in the experiments of this research asked the participants to rank within and among the sets of humorous materials.

5.4.3. Identification tasks

The identification task seeks the test takers to decide whether the stimuli is humorous or not and locate the aspect/part of the stimuli that is causing humorous effect. In these tasks the test takers read/listen/view the stimuli and select the ones they find humorous and then respond to them by identifying the punchline or jabline as the case may be.

5.4.4. Completion tasks

The completion tasks throw incomplete sentences as stimuli and ask the test takers to fill in the missing part. These tasks are highly useful in examining the comprehension and production of the unsaid and masked elements in the concerned instance of humour. Quite often the completion tasks resemble cloze tests and sentence completion tasks wherein the participants read the available stimulus and suggest the missing parts. Though completion tasks are not very common in humour experiments, their significance in testing humour recall is very high.

5.4.5. Experiment materials and scaling methods

As the previous chapters have demonstrated joke, pun, tongue twister, riddle, oxymoron, counterfactual headline, witty one-liner etc. are natural instances of verbal humour. Arguably, they qualify as test materials for humour experiments. The following reasons further strengthen their inclusion in such experiments.

- a) They reflect upon everyday language use.
- b) They reflect figurative language processing in typical situations
- c) They can provide a broader account on mini texts
- d) They can serve as material for the analysis of entertainment discourse at intra-personal, inter-personal and inter-cultural levels.

In addition, some of the experiments adapted the practice materials listed in *Grammar with Laughter* by Woolard (1999).

Scaling methods

Following are the three main scaling techniques:

- a) Thurstone or Equal-Appearing Interval Scaling,
- b) Likert or Summative Scaling and
- c) Guttman or Cumulative Scaling.

The above scaling techniques show similarity in the presentation of the measure. However, they adopt different gradation style and scale values for various items. A careful adoption of these methods may ensure the standardization of the information gathering process and help in keeping away the confounding factors in the study.

5.4.6. Observer's paradox, emotional baggage and the anonymity criterion

When human subjects participate in psycholinguistic experiments, three factors can affect their response negatively. First, the awareness somebody is monitoring them can cause delay or disruption in the natural response. Scholars in sociolinguistics and dialectology have termed this kind of influence over the participants' response as observer's paradox. Second, in humour experiments the socio-cultural affiliations such as caste, class, literacy level, gender etc., of the participants can cast a negative influence on the response data. Therefore, it is important that the emotional baggage associated with socio-cultural affiliations do affect the response data. Third, an ethical issue in socio-psychological experiments is concealing the identity of the participants. There is consensus among the scholars to maintain anonymity of the participants. The experimenter needs to minimise

the possibility of interference from any of the three discussed above. Concerning this, an advantage of the profiling approach is that neither it seeks nor it reveals the socio-cultural belongings of the participants. It studies certain key features and focuses on how these features correspond to the stimuli.

5.4.7. A pilot study

The pilot study concerning the processing of humorous stimuli involved fifty-five participants who responded through online and offline modes. The prospective participants underwent profiling before taking part in the experiment. They completed two profiling questionnaires before taking part in the pilot study. The materials for pilot study comprised of verbal humour in various forms and the tasks that the participants undertook included ratings, rankings and identification of punchline. The pilot study confirmed the applicability of the experiment design and the modes of administration for exploring the issue of profiling and humour experience.

5.5.1. Experiment 1: Processing self-directed humour

Introduction: Gelotophobia, gelotophilia and katagelasticism

The term gelotophobia refers to the fear of being laughed at (Führ 2010, Platt 2009 and Proyer & Ruch 2009b & 2010). According to Proyer and Ruch (2010), “gelotophobes strongly fear being laughed at and being ridiculed. They misinterpret laughter and smiling as something negative – as a means that others use to put them down.” However, it is important to note that gelotophobia is a universal experience and the degree to which a person is gelotophobic or likely to develop gelotophobia varies considerably. Contrastively, gelotophilia refers to the joy of being laughed at, while katagelasticism refers to the joy of laughing at others’ misery and difficulties. This research considers gelotophobia as an unintended product of inter-personal interactions. The authors are of the opinion that the development of gelotophobia in an individual is not arbitrary and that the fear of being laughed at, irrespective of the degree to which it exhibits itself, is directly proportional to the experience of being insulted and bullied during the inter-personal interactions. The research literature indicates that there is very little work on gelotophobia and the ones available are of recent origin. In fact, the credit for gelotophobia research should go to Proyer & Ruch (2010) who gave ample thrust to this issue and brought it to the forefront of research arena. Their contribution to gelotophobia research is incredibly large and diverse. However, gelotophobia studies still confines to the discipline of psychology and the focus of research mainly rests on adult men and women. In this regard, Führ (2010), which studied Danish children and adolescents, is an exception. Gelotophobia has its manifestations on text based mobile and cyber communication as well. Consequently, some people exhibit greater inhibition to posting their opinion on issues of general concern fearing that it might turn out to be a laughter stock. A study on cyber gelotophobia is yet to come.

Objectives

- a) To examine the impact of self-directed verbal humour on the experience of funniness.
- b) To study gelotophobia, gelotophilia and katagelasticism (PhoPhiKat) in humorous interactions.

- c) To compare the enjoyment of denigrating humour across different personality types and their corresponding orientations towards jokes.

Task

The task for this experiment included rating of jokes that target self and jokes that target others. The experiment asked the participants to rate such jokes for funniness.

Participants

The recruitment process of the participants for this experiment focussed on the personality profile and humour orientation of the test takers. Therefore, age, sex, economic background and educational achievements of the participants did not influence their selection for this experiment. Of the total nine hundred sixty participants who took FIRO-B and JaI tests and completed the tasks for this experiment, the researcher sampled the response of an average forty participants belonging to each trait for comparison and analysis.

Materials and presentation

The materials for this experiment included sets of self-denigrating jokes and teasers. The degree of denigration in the test items remained constant. The participants undertook this experiment online as well as offline. Their participation in this experiment followed the completion of FIRO-B and JaI profiling in the platform of their choice. On an average, they spent twenty minutes to complete the profiling and ten minutes complete the experiment task. The online format facilitated the availability of participants representing a wide spectrum of population. For the purpose, the researcher utilized the services of google forms. The web link for this experiment remained active and permitted participation for about eight weeks. For the online format, the researcher visited various academic institutions and distributed the questionnaire that the participants filled in and returned.

Motivations for self-directed humour

The self-directed humour or self-reflexive humour is a special kind of humour use where the target of the joke is often the introducer himself/herself. Other names for self-directed humour include self-deflating humour, self-depreciating humour, self-disparagement humour etc. It may exist in different guise though, this variety of humour use is quite common and the language users often employ them to achieve some pre-planned goals. These instances of humour exhibit the following motivations:

- a) Endeavour towards attention seeking
- b) Averting an aggression on self
- c) Accomplishment of pedagogical objectives
- d) Establishment of favourable rapport with (un)familiar audience
- e) Confessional revelation about past self
- f) Satirical, ironic or insulting remarks to other interlocutors in the interaction
- g) Exaggerating or introducing an over-ambitious project

This variety of humour is available at all platforms and in all formats. Consequently, the examples of self-directed humour are available in forms of jokes, cartoons, stand-up comedy and many more. This paper makes use of self-directed jokes. These jokes are formed by manipulative use of language and they tend to mislead by design. From the structural point of view, these instances of humour mostly include the following patterns:

(a) Question-answer type, (b) Funny and witty one-liners (c) Knock-knock jokes. A formal description of such instances of verbal humour would appear like the following:

- i. Question: What is X?
Answer: X is Y. No X is Y`
- ii. X is so Y that Z
- iii. Knock-knock. Who is that?
It is X. Who X?
X` that is/did Y

Consider the following examples:

Sl. No.	Instances of self-directed humour
i	Can a kangaroo jump higher than Qutub minar? Yes! Because the Qutub minar cannot jump.
ii	“You must bring change” great lines said by, guess? A bus conductor of course!
iii	Take out all the clothes at night, I mean from the ropes, since there is no certainty of rain.
iv	Software techie; I cannot print. Every time I try it says “cannot find printer.” I even lifted it and kept it in front of the monitor.
v	Question: Should women have children after thirty-five. No! Thirty-five children are more than enough.

Table 5.5: Self-directed humour

An important aspect of these jokes is that the response to them varies considerably. Some people find them ‘very funny’, some find them ‘little funny’, yet others find them ‘not funny at all’.

Result and discussion

The response data indicates that people in general like to joke at others. There are more adversarial jokes than non-adversarial jokes. Therefore, people are at times ready to return an adversarial joke with another one of similar or higher magnitude. The following table presents a tally of personality’s traits and their response to self-directed humour. In the following the signs + and – indicate positive and negative responses respectively.

Sl. No.	Participant type based on FIRO-B scale	Humour targeting self	Humour targeting others
1	High inclusion expressed	+	+
2	High inclusion wanted	+	+
3	High control expressed	-	+
4	High control wanted	+	+
5	High affection expressed	-	-
6	High affection wanted	+	-
7	Medium inclusion expressed	+	+
8	Medium inclusion wanted	-	+
9	Medium control expressed	-	+
10	Medium control wanted	-	+

11	Medium affection expressed	+	-
12	Medium affection wanted	+	-
13	Low inclusion expressed	-	-
14	Low inclusion wanted	-	+
15	Low control expressed	+	-
16	Low control wanted	-	+
17	Low affection expressed	-	+
18	Low affection wanted	+	+

Table 5.6: Personality type and preference for humour

The above table indicates that if an individual has high inclusion expressed and another individual has low inclusion expressed their participation in humour targeting self and other would vary diametrically. The table below presents the comparison between the personality traits and their orientation towards jokes.

Sl. No.	Participants personality traits based on FIRO-B scale	Correlates with humour orientation on JaI Scale
1	High inclusion expressed	Super inclined
2	High inclusion wanted	Super inclined
3	High control expressed	Inclined
4	High control wanted	Inclined
5	High affection expressed	Super-inclined
6	High affection wanted	Inclined
7	Medium inclusion expressed	Sub-inclined
8	Medium inclusion wanted	Sub-inclined
9	Medium control expressed	Sub-inclined
10	Medium control wanted	Uninclined
11	Medium affection expressed	Sub-inclined
12	Medium affection wanted	Uninclined
13	Low inclusion expressed	Uninclined
14	Low inclusion wanted	Antagonistic
15	Low control expressed	Uninclined
16	Low control wanted	Antagonistic
17	Low affection expressed	Antagonistic
18	Low affection wanted	Uninclined

Table 5.7: FIRO-B and JaI scale correlates

The response data shows an interesting correlation between the personality traits and their corresponding orientation towards jokes in general and self-denigrating jokes in particular.

5.5.2. Experiment 2: Processing tendentious humour. A comparative study of normative, dynamic and para jokes

Introduction

Tendentious humour refers to a class of verbal humour that involves canned jokes, conversational jokes, stereotypes and domain-specific humour.^{ix} Tendentious humour is perhaps the most common form of verbal humour and that is why it attracts a

good amount of response. This kind of humour is easily customizable and does not require any special training to use them. They can occur in two easily observable forms. One is the normative or patterned form, while the other is dynamic or unique form. The former follows a template while the latter follows several templates. In the former, it is easier to predict the punchline after a couple of examples have occurred. In the latter, it is relatively difficult to predict the punchline. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Instances of normative jokes
i	Before leaving for work, I used to give elaborate instructions to my wife about what to pack for my lunch. Once, when a neighbour asked my son, what I did for a living, he replied, "Papa goes to office to eat lunch." Source ^x
ii	When my three-year-old daughter got her first piggy bank, I noticed her admiring it. "Cool!" I said. "Are you going to money in there?" She looked at me and replied, "No you are." Source ^{xi}
iii	Sardar calls a doctor on phone and says "My wife is pregnant and she is having pain." Doctor: Is this her first child? Sardar: No, no! This is her husband speaking.
iv	Sardar to his servant "go and water the plants" Servant: Sir it's already raining. Sardar: So what? Take an umbrella and go.
v	Santa: Suna hai tum apni wife ke saath bartan dhote ho. (Heard that you do utensils with your wife). Banta: Are to kyaa huaa? Wo bhii to mere saath khaanaa pakaatii hai. (Big deal! She also cooks food with me).

Table 5.8a: Instances of normative jokes

In all the items of the above table the funniness arises due to the ignorance of the main characters. Therefore, after encountering a couple of items the readers can probably predict that the next items would also have ignorance of the protagonist as its theme. The same holds true for joke cycles and para jokes wherein the encounter with a few items works as prime for the items to follow. The above table has only joke items, however, the logical mechanisms would be similar for the joke cycle or para jokes. In contrast, the dynamic jokes will have new set-up and varying themes in each case. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Instances of dynamic jokes
i	Teacher: Why are you late for the class? Students: It is because of the signboard on road. Teacher: What signboard did cause you delay? Student: Signboard that read, Go Slow – School Ahead.
ii	Biology teacher told his students: There are eight sexually transmitted diseases. You will get at least one in the practical exam.
iii	Doctor and engineer fell in love with the same girl.

	Every day, the doctor used to give her a rose, but the engineer gave her an apple every day. One day, the doctor asked the engineer, “why?” The engineer replied, “because an apple a day keeps the doctor away.”
iv	A kid fails in exam Father: Aaj ke baad mujhe apnaa baap mat kahnaa (Today onwards don't ever call me your dad) Son: Come on dad! It was a class test not a DNA test.
v	Argument between a British and an Indian British: We spoiled your motherland for 200 years Indian: we are spoiling your mother tongue every day.

Table 5.8b: Instances of dynamic jokes

The items in the above table have jokes that exhibit new set-up and varying themes. They have different logical mechanisms. Therefore, it is not possible to predict the nature of the ones that would follow. All items in the above table are instances of jokes; however, para jokes such as witty one-liners also have similarly varying themes and punchlines. Arguably, to dynamic jokes one-liners are what joke cycles are to normative jokes.

Naturally, tendentious humour is part of humour experience of all individuals. However, it is also important to note that its universal presence leading to frequent encounters with it barely affects the orientation of people towards humour. In this context it is natural to inquire how people of different personality dispositions respond to it. As discussed earlier canned jokes, conversational jokes and metalinguistic jokes are not different varieties of humour. Rather they are different points of origin of jokes. An important point to note here is that the instances of tendentious and domain specific humour can be either normative or dynamic. If they are normative they follow an identical logical mechanism for all instances. However, if they are dynamic they follow a unique logical mechanism for each instance of verbal humour. Accordingly, the former employs a common formula for creating funniness, whereas the later employs several formulae.

Reusability is an important aspect of jokes. It shows how funny a particular instantiation is. A joke that one finds reusable must have impressed the person and caused cognitive harmony to him/her. Therefore, reusability is an indirect indicator about the popularity of an instance of verbal humour.

In the light of the above, this experiment examined the participants' experiences of funniness in tendentious humour. It tried to capture and explain test takers' differences in the experience of funniness expressed through response to sequential encounters with normative and dynamic instances of tendentious jokes. Secondly, it also compared the reusability prospects of normative, dynamic and para jokes that the test takers rated for this experiment.

Objectives

The objectives of this experiment are as following:

- a) To examine how normative and dynamic instances of tendentious humour affect the experience of funniness.
- b) To compare the reusability prospects for the dynamic/unique jokes, patterned/recursive jokes and para jokes.

Tasks

The participants took two tasks in a single sitting. Following are the tasks they undertook: Task one: The participants read stimulus containing normative, dynamic and para jokes and decided whether they found them funny or not. In case they found a particular stimulus funny, they also graded them on a scale of funniness.

Task two: After rating the jokes, the test-takers selected five items that they would like to reuse.

Participants

Sixty research students from the University of Hyderabad and the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad voluntarily participated in this experiment. The participants included an equal number of males and females aging between 20 and 28. The mean age of the participants was 24.6 years with standard deviation of 2.30. All participants who took this experiment spoke Hindi-Urdu as their first language and showed high proficiency in English.

Materials and presentation

The materials for this experiment consisted of twenty-five normative and dynamic jokes and para jokes in the proportion of 3:1:1 respectively. Therefore, every participant rated fifteen normative, five dynamic and five para jokes. The three variables did not appear sequentially. The participants moved from one item to the next only after rating that item. At the end of it they identified five such items that they would like to reuse.

Result and discussion

The preference based on high ratings for the three variables is given below. In the illustration the alphabet letters correspond to the following:

IE	Inclusion expressed	IW	Inclusion wanted
CE	Control expressed	CW	Control wanted
AE	Affection expressed	AW	Affection wanted

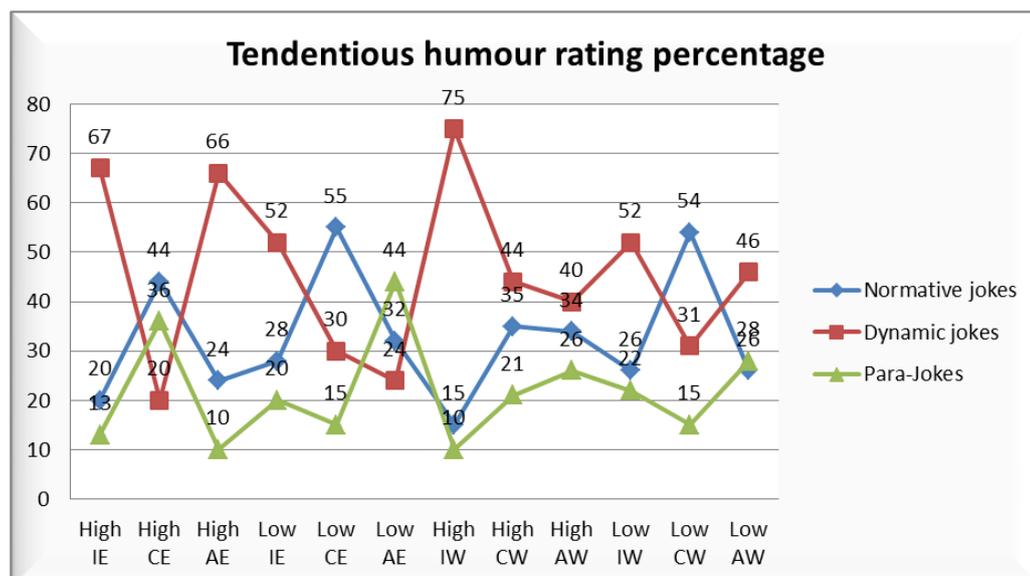


Illustration 5.1: Rating percentage for tendentious humour

It is evident in the above illustration that the participants rated the dynamic instantiations as funnier than the patterned instantiations and joke cycles. The element of surprise is higher in dynamic instantiations than in normative instantiations and para jokes. That is why they are more desirable than others.

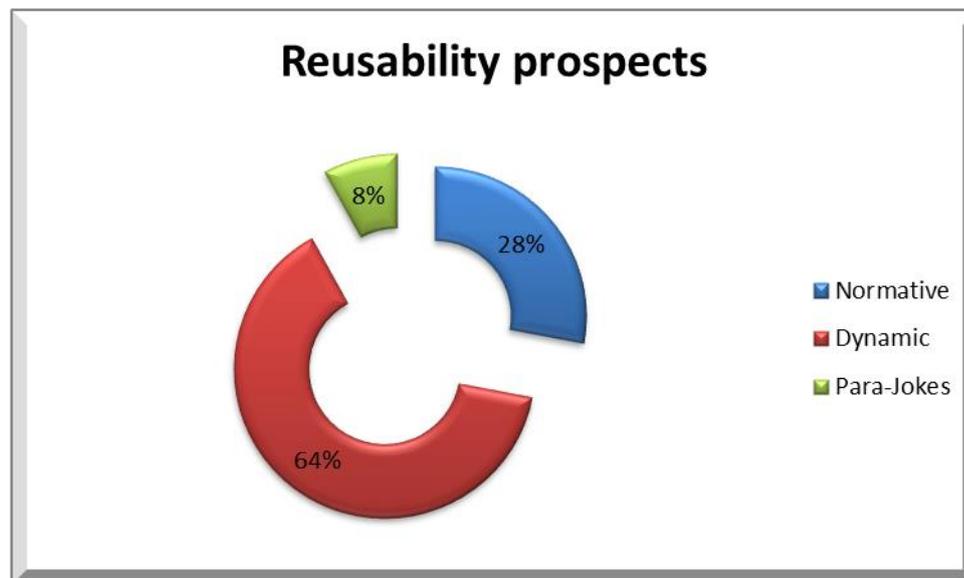


Illustration 5.2: Comparison of reusability prospects

The data shows that participants across different personality traits find unique instantiations funnier than patterned instances. The participants having high inclusion expressed and high inclusion wanted traits gave highest ratings to the dynamic jokes. The fact that dynamic jokes have relatively much higher chances of reusability than normative jokes and para jokes also corroborates the fact that people in general like dynamic jokes more than normative jokes and para jokes.

5.5.3. Experiment 3: Processing forced reinterpretation in mini entertainment texts

Introduction

The cognitive mechanisms, including the coercive techniques form the most significant aspect of the headlines. With respect to the cognitive aspects of news headlines, Molek-Kozakowska (2014) discusses seven metaphor-based coercive strategies. The strategies include: (a) Simplifications, (b) Imaging, (c) Animalization, (d) Confrontation, (e) (De)legitimization, (f) Emotionalization and (g) Dramatization. It is evident from the example that Molek-Kozakowska's strategies are quite relevant to the classification and analysis of the counterfactual headlines.

Objectives

- To study the processing of mini texts of entertainment discourse in different contexts.
- To study the processing of reinterpretations forced through humour.

Materials and presentation

The test materials comprising of mini entertainment texts appeared sequentially while the test takers rated them for funniness. The materials included two balanced sets of twenty

one liners and twenty fake headlines. The test takers rated the forty instantiations one by one occurring in a mixed pattern.

Task

Rating of short humorous stimuli like one-liners, wits, quotes, and fake headlines

Condition-i: One-liners in multiple contexts and

Condition-ii: Fake headlines in multiple contexts

The participants rated the stimuli for both the conditions on an ascending scale of five wherein the number one referred to not funny, two referred to little funny, three meant funny, four referred to very funny and five stood for cannot say.

Participants

One hundred and twenty participants belonging to three academic institutions of Hyderabad, India undertook this experiment and rated the stimuli for funniness. The participants volunteering for the experiment read the instances of mini entertainment texts in both the conditions mentioned above and graded them for funniness.

Result and discussion

The experimenter reorganised the response data obtained from the participants on the basis of the personality profile of the participants. Subsequently, the test takers fell in the following brackets: (a) High inclusion and control expressed and (b) High inclusion and high control wanted. The response of the two categories of participants is as follows:

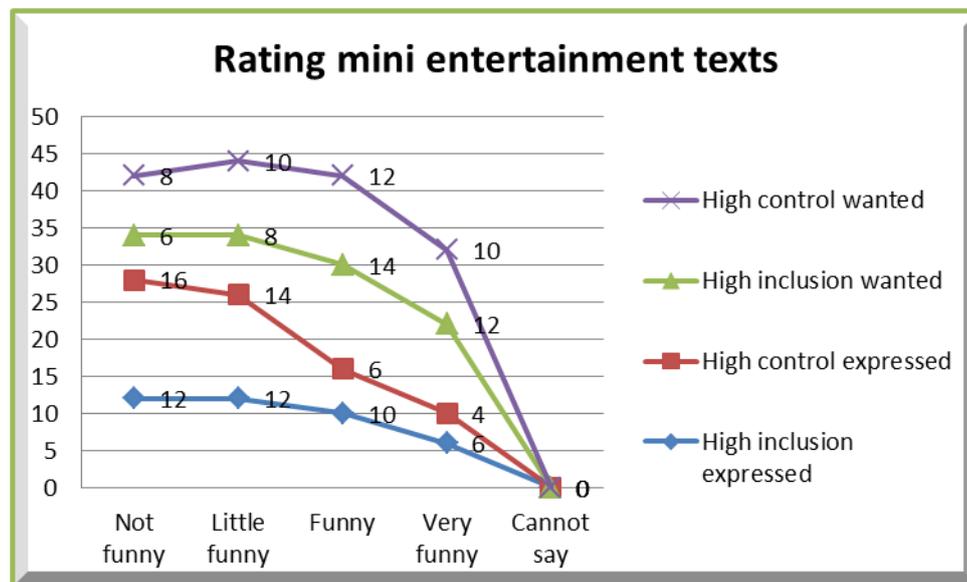


Illustration 5.3: Rating mini entertainment texts

None of the participants used the option cannot say. Therefore, their ratings remained between not funny and very funny. It is evident from the above that participants with personality type of high inclusion expressed and high control expressed have given lesser ratings to the stimuli occurring in the form of mini entertainment texts than the participants with high inclusion wanted and high control wanted.

5.5.4. Experiment 4: Processing metaphors and metonyms in visual-verbal texts

Introduction

Most scholars have interpreted metaphors and metonyms as figures of speech. However, in the cognitive linguistic paradigm metaphor and metonymy are excellent tools employable during casual as well as figurative interactions. The literary scholars and lexicographers tend to distinguish between the two terms. The metaphor is a figure of speech through which an expression refers to something that it does not denote literally in order to indicate a similarity. In contrast, a metonym is a word that denotes one thing but refers to something different. The eminent linguist Roman Jakobson considers metaphors and metonymy as two forms of human behaviour. Jakobson (1956) also distinguishes metaphor and metonymy as non-identical ways of gaining and expressing information. According to Dirven (2003), the literal and figurative usages lie on a continuum that has metaphor and metonymy in between the two. The cognitive linguists such as Langacker (1987) draw the distinction between metaphor and metonymy in terms of domains they participate in. This implies that metaphors and metonymy do not participate in the same number of domains. Metaphors participate across domains while metonyms play within a single domain. In *Meaning and Humour* Goatly (2012) illustrates how cognitive metaphors serve the interpretation of humorous expressions. This work describes how conventional metaphors result in new lexical entities and draws parallels between metaphors and humour.

Research concerning metaphors indicates a leaning of the focus on verbal and cognitive aspects of the metaphors. However, other avenues for instance gesturing & signing and images & cartoons also involve the use of metaphors. Undoubtedly, the employment of metaphors in body language especially signs and pictures especially cartoons is as rich as the use of metaphors in a poet's work. However, the researchers' undue inclination towards the verbal aspects of metaphor has prevented the scientific observations to come. Researchers from cognitive sciences as well as Linguistics and Philosophy have mostly focused on the verbal aspects of metaphors. Consequently, a potentially significant phenomenon, pictorial metaphor did not receive the attention it deserves. In a significant departure from the trend, Forceville (2002) demonstrates how metaphors occur in pictures and provides a framework to analyse them.

“Metaphor is not only a cognitive but also pragmatic phenomenon, since its perlocutionary effects and felicitous uses are as important to study as its embodied bases or cognitive structuring. Moreover, the stability of conventionalized metaphors is often central to pragmatically efficient interaction.” Molek-Kozakowska (2014: 2)

Concerning the application of the Relevance Theory to pictorial metaphors Forceville (1996: 99 & 2005: 253) indicates the following points of attention:

- (a) non-co-presence in time,
- (b) the number of communicators involved,
- (c) their multimodal character and
- (d) the ambiguity of the verbal part.

Forceville (2002: 1) observes that most research on metaphors concentrate on the verbal aspects. Therefore, the visual aspects of metaphors have remained underrepresented in research. Arguably, the visual aspects of metaphoric and metonymic uses are difficult to pursue through tools prevalent in Linguistics. However, a sub-set of this category that the

present research terms as visual-verbal metaphors and metonyms gels well with the tools of Linguistics. Consider the following examples:

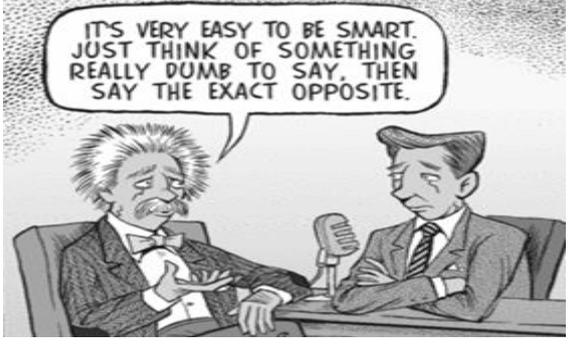
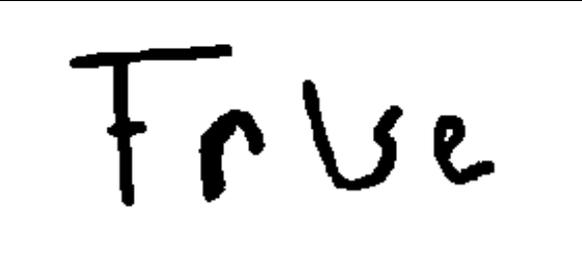
Sl. No.	Textual humour	Visual-Verbal Humour
i	While stealing from one is plagiarism, stealing from many is research.	
ii	Revealed: How Einstein became so smart?	
iii	The actual meaning of 24 x 7 open	
iv	The right way to answer true - false questions	

Table 5.9: Humorous stimuli in textual and visual-verbal forms

In the above, it is evident that the humour arises due to a fine cooperation between visual and textual/verbal. Independently, the above images or the texts may fail to impress or would not be as hilarious as they are together. The present research terms these instantiations of humour as visual-verbal humour. Therefore, visual-verbal humour is a

mixed form of humour having an image and some text that jointly contribute to funniness. The following experiment studies the processing of visual-verbal humour in comparison to humour that are visual only or verbal only.

Objectives

- a) To examine how metaphoric and metonymic aspects cooperate in visual and verbal and visual-verbal humour constructions.
- b) To study the processing of humorous images containing metaphors and metonyms in visual-verbal forms.

Tasks

This experiment required the participants to complete both rating as well as ranking tasks. Task 1: The participants rated the visual-verbal humour containing metaphors and metonyms. They observed the visual-verbal humour and rated them for funniness on a five-point Likert type response format.

Task 2: The participants ranked among three humorous stimuli that had metaphoric or metonymic punch in pure image or pure text or visual-verbal form. The ranking arranged the stimuli in each set as most funny, average funny and least funny.

Participants

Altogether eighty-eight participants volunteered to take this experiment. However, three of them left it incomplete. Therefore, the present discussion bases itself on the data available from the eighty-five participants who completed the rating and ranking tasks.

Materials and presentation

The materials for this experiment included the following: comic strips, hilarious cartoons and funny images. The materials that qualified for this focussed on the following aspects: (a) Purely visual images, (b) Purely textual images and (c) Visual-verbal mixed images. Twelve sets each having a unit member belonging to the three aspects formed the questionnaire.

Result and discussion

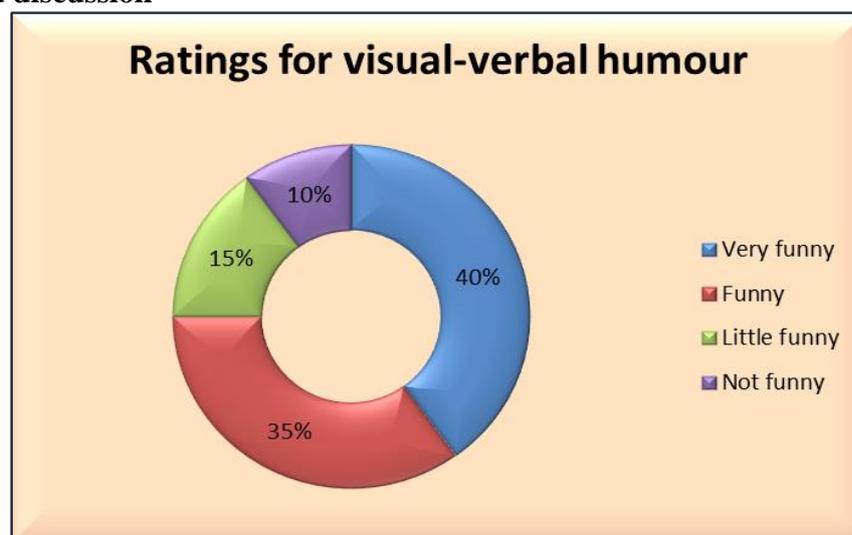


Illustration 5.4: Ratings for visual-verbal humour

It is evident from the above that the participants rated the visual-verbal humour as very funny or funny more often than little funny or not funny. In the following the combination of alphabet letters M-M refers to metaphoric and metonymic. In this context they refer to such humorous instances where the funniness arises due metaphoric and metonymic usages.

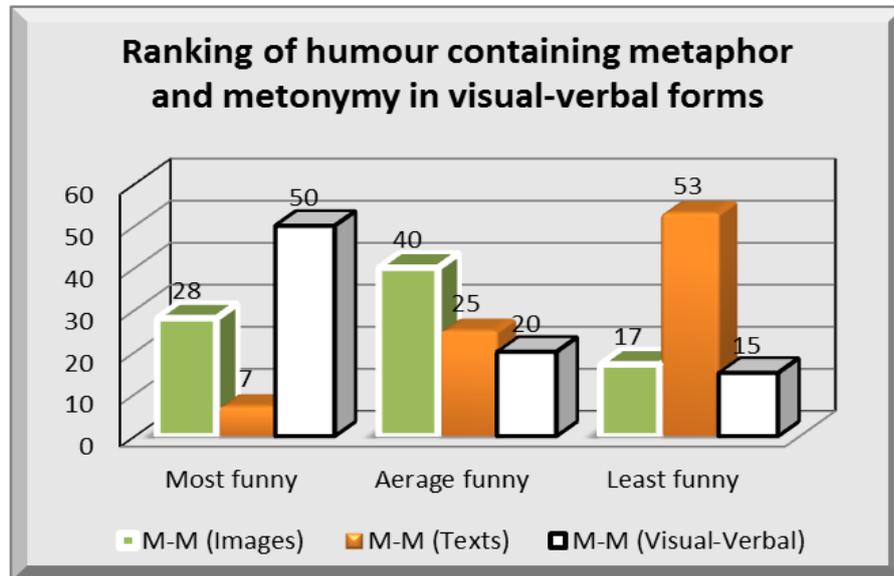


Illustration 5.5: Comparative ranking of visual, verbal and visual-verbal humour

The visual-verbal humour received maximum ratings from the participants. This implies that concerning humour processing the mixed form is facilitative. It is evident that the participants' experience of funniness in processing visual-verbal humour was higher than their experience of funniness in processing only visual or only verbal stimuli.

5.5.5. Experiment 5: Processing ambiguities in puns, riddles, GP utterances and tongue twisters

Introduction

The verbal humour embodied in puns, riddles and garden-path utterances is quite distinct type. These instances do not let the hearer know that something funny is about to come. In addition, the difference between what the hearers assume and what it actually comes out to be is high. From cognitive linguistic viewpoint, puzzlement is a constitutive aspect of these sub-genres. The processing of humorous stimuli involving garden-path structures necessitates concealment/delay in the relay of information and modification of interpretation at the end. According to Mayerhofer (2014: vii),

“the comprehension process is assumed as probabilistic, non-monotonic, and incremental reasoning towards the most plausible interpretation of both linguistic and non-linguistic input.”

Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Pun and garden-path humour
i	He told me I was in shape. It was nice with the exception that round is a shape as well.
ii	She has her looks from her father. He's a plastic surgeon.

iii	Question: Should women have children after thirty-five? Answer: No! Thirty-five children are more than enough.
-----	---

Table 5.10: Pun and GP humour^{xii}

This experiment explores the processing of verbal humour such as puns, riddles, tongue twisters and garden-path utterances. These sub-genres of verbal humour often appear as a challenging puzzle in which the hearer fails more often than succeeds. An important point concerning the size of these forms is that they usually do not cross the 160-character limit of the text messages.

Objective

To compare the processing and enjoyment of humour arising due to structural and lexical ambiguities in puns and riddles against the hilarious adjustments required in reading the garden path utterances and tongue twisters.

Task

The task for this experiment included rating of the humorous stimuli on five-point scale. The test asked the takers to rate each item choosing from ‘very enjoyable’ on the one end and ‘annoying’ on the other.

Participants

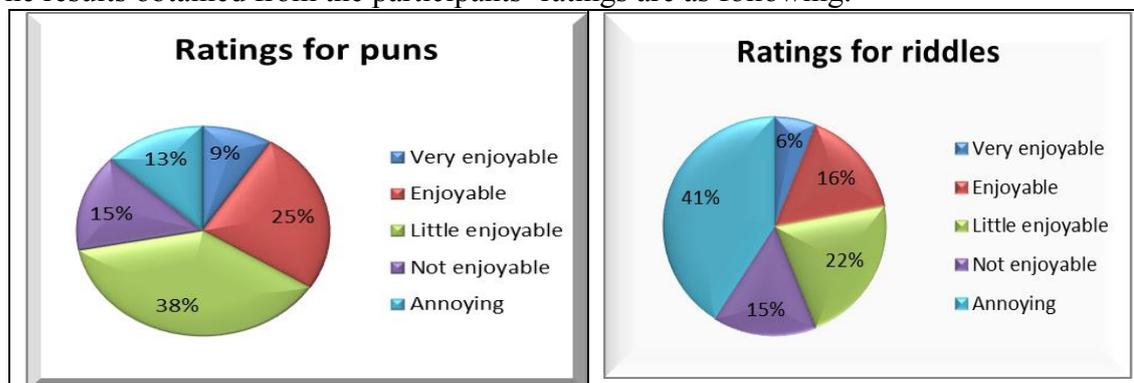
One hundred and thirty research students affiliated to following institutions of higher studies: (a) University of Hyderabad, (b) International Institute of Information Technology, and (c) The English and Foreign Languages University participated in this experiment. All participants who took part in this experiment also filled up the self-reflexive language proficiency declaration.

Materials and presentation

The materials for this experiment included ambiguous puns and riddles and hilarious garden path utterances and tongue twisters. The materials appeared in four sets of verbal humour. Set one contained twenty ambiguous puns, set two contained twenty ambiguous riddles, set three contained twenty hilarious garden-path utterances and set four contained twenty tongue twisters in English.

Result and discussion

The results obtained from the participants’ ratings are as following:



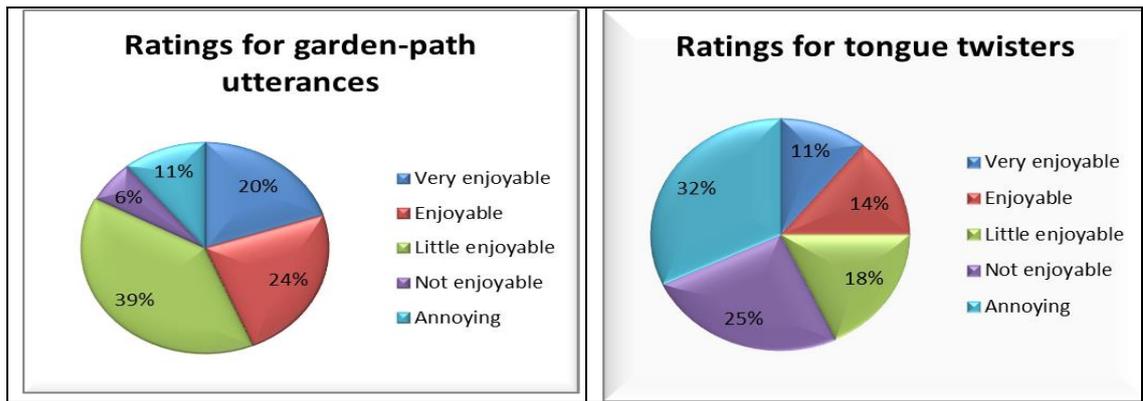


Table 5.11: Ratings for individual sub-types

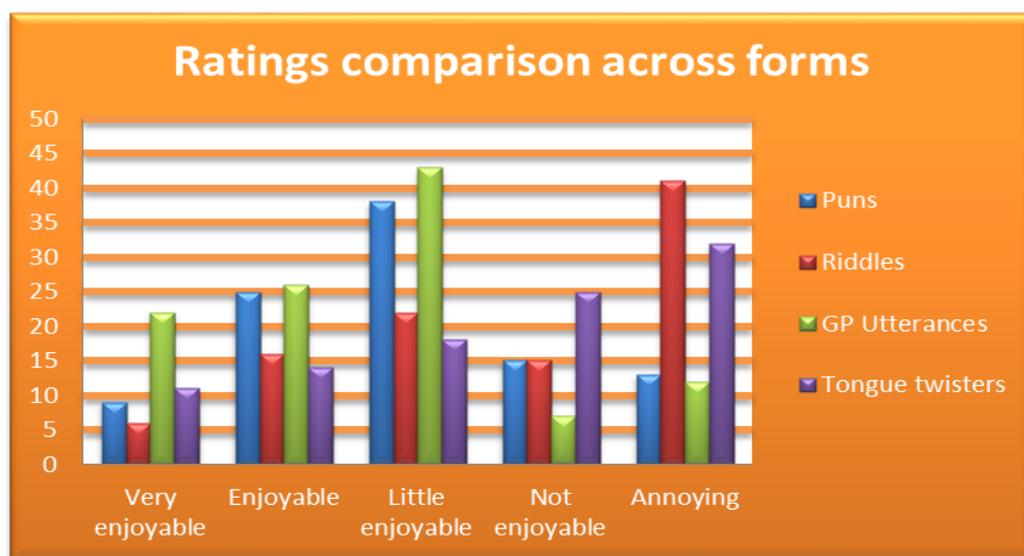


Illustration 5.6: Ratings comparison across sub-genres

This experiment studied the processing of short humorous texts under the following conditions: (i) puns, (ii) riddles, (iii) garden path utterances, and (iv) tongue twisters. The conclusion that one can draw from the above illustrations is that verbal humour containing puns and garden-path utterances have received high ratings in enjoyable and very enjoyable categories whereas the tongue twisters and riddles are rated high in the not enjoyable and annoying categories.

5.5.6. Experiment 6: Processing monolingual and code-mixed jokes

Introduction

Numerous researchers have claimed that a significant majority of the world population is bilingual. Therefore, a social interaction in more than one language has emerged as a common phenomenon. Frequent code mixing and code switching in all domains of interactions has rendered bilingualism a norm rather than an exception. Consequently, a new genre known as 'code-mixed jokes' has emerged. This entails that bilingual individuals create and experience verbal humour in more than one language. However,

there is very little research on the bilingual aspects of humour construction and comprehension.

A lacuna observed in the humour theories is that almost all of them have ignored the jokes emerging due to language contact and bilingualism. It is likely that they have considered monolingualism as the norm and have ignored the inter-linguistic and cross-linguistic humour. Vaid (2006) is an exception to this norm and the motivation for this experiment comes from her paper, “Joking Across Languages.” She claims that research on bilingual individuals’ humour use would immensely widen our understanding on the phenomenon of bilingualism. When people in multilingual and multicultural communities involve into humorous interactions, they need to continually shift their identities and adjust with hybridity (ibid: 162) to manage the power and solidarity aspect. To understand this fact and the pragmatic aspects of the language used by bilinguals the following questions are relevant:

- a) How is the experience of code-mixed jokes different from monolingual jokes?
- b) Does code mixing have facilitative or inhibitory effect on the bilinguals?
- c) Do bilinguals show a preference for language when it comes to humour interpretation?
- d) Do bilinguals prefer and use translatable jokes in bilingual settings?

In order to address these questions we conducted an empirical study involving code-mixed jokes on Hindi-English speaking bilinguals. Selected through a self-assessment questionnaire twenty (12 males and 8 females) persons aging 18-30 years participated in the study. This study focuses on the following three aspects of the bilingual participants' humour experience: (a) rating of jokes, (b) identification of punchline and (c) accounting for funniness. The data indicates that the bilinguals prefer code-mixed jokes to monolingual jokes. This proves the fact that there is no preference for language with respect to humour use by bilinguals. It also proves that code mixing does not have an inhibitory effect on the humour experience of the bilingual participants. Some of the jokes used in the experiment have been included as sample items in this paper. Consider the following:

Sl. No.	Code mixed	English equivalent
i	Angry boss: $\text{t}\ddot{\text{u}}\text{mne k}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{b}^{\text{h}}\text{i ul:u d}\ddot{\text{e}}\text{k}^{\text{h}}\text{a h}\ddot{\text{e}}?$ Employee: $\text{s}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{r d}\ddot{\text{z}}\text{u}\text{k}\ddot{\text{a}} \text{k}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{r k}^{\text{h}}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{r}\ddot{\text{a}} \text{r}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{h}\ddot{\text{t}}\text{a h}\ddot{\text{e}}$ Boss: $\text{n}\ddot{\text{r}}\text{t}\ddot{\text{f}}\text{e k}\ddot{\text{j}}\ddot{\text{u}} \text{d}\ddot{\text{e}}\text{k}^{\text{h}} \text{r}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{h}\ddot{\text{e}} \text{h}\ddot{\text{o}} \text{I}\ddot{\text{d}}^{\text{h}}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{r d}\ddot{\text{e}}\text{k}^{\text{h}}\text{o}$	Angry boss: Have you ever seen an owl? Employee: Head down, says nothing Boss: Why are you looking down? Look here, at me.
ii	Students were talking after the exam First student: I left the paper blank. Did not know any answer. Second student: $\text{m}\ddot{\text{e}}\text{n}\ddot{\text{e}} \text{b}^{\text{h}}\text{i p}\ddot{\text{u}}\text{r}\ddot{\text{a}}$ blank $\text{t}\ddot{\text{f}}^{\text{h}}\text{o}\text{r d}\ddot{\text{r}}\text{i}\text{j}\ddot{\text{a}}$ Third student: $\text{\ddot{a}}\text{r}\ddot{\text{e}} \text{n}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{h}\ddot{\text{i}}!$ teacher $\text{s}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{m}\text{d}\ddot{\text{z}}^{\text{h}}\text{e}\text{g}\text{i h}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{m}\text{n}\ddot{\text{e}} \text{e}\text{k d}\ddot{\text{u}}\text{s}\text{r}\ddot{\text{e}} \text{s}\ddot{\text{e}} \text{c}\text{o}\text{p}\text{y k}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{j}\ddot{\text{a}}$.	Students were talking after the exam First student: I left the paper blank. Did not know any answer. Second student: I too left it completely blank. Third student: Oh no! The teacher will think we copied from each other.
	Doctor: You need stitches.	Doctor: You need stitches.

iii	Patient: cost kja ajeḡa? Doctor: ₹5000 Patient: sɪrf stitches ḡena, no embroidery please!	What will be the expense? Doctor: ₹5000 Patient: Give only stitches, no embroidery please.
iv	Teacher: Tell me a sentence that starts with I Student: I is the ... Teacher: Stop! Stop! Stop! kəbʰi bʰi I ke baḡ is məṭ ləḡao. I ke baḡ həmeʃa am ləḡṭa hɛ. Student: Okay, I am the ninth letter of English alphabet.	Teacher: Tell me a sentence that starts with I Student: I is the ... Teacher: Stop! Stop! Stop! Never use 'is' after I. You should always use 'am' after I. Student: Okay, I am the ninth letter of English alphabet.
v	Manu: I'm going ka məṭləb kja hoṭa hɛ? Ravi: mɛ dʒa rəha hū Manu: ɛse dʒane nəhī ḡūṅḡa pəhle məṭləb bəṭao	What is the meaning of I am going in Hindi? I am going I will not let you go, first tell me the meaning.

Table 5.12: Code-mixed jokes

Objectives

This experiment has the following objectives:

- To explore if Hindi-English bilinguals show preference for language concerning the use of verbal humour.
- To explore in what ways code-mixing and code-switching affect the experience of funniness in jokes.

Tasks

The tasks involved in this experiment include rating, identification of punchlines and accounting for funniness in humorous stimuli. This experiment conducted a three-dimensional psycholinguistic experiment on balanced bilinguals of Hindi and English. The three dimensions of the experiment include: (a) Rating of jokes, (b) Identification of punchline and (c) Accounting for funniness. The experiment first captured the subjects' ratings on funniness of the humorous stimuli. They could select from the four options shown on the screen. The options included very funny, funny, little funny and not funny. Next, it examined their accuracy in the identification of punchline of the jokes they heard. For this task, the experiment required the participants to identify the part of the audio that caused the experience of funniness. Finally, the experiment collected their response on why they found the given stimuli funny. For the purpose it used LINGER, a dedicated software program for language processing experiments. Here, it employed this program in an online listening task assigned to the subjects.

Participants

Twenty Hindi-English bilinguals ageing 18-30 years participated in the experiment. The experiment included only balanced bilingual subjects, those who were equally proficient in Hindi and English. For this purpose, a self-assessment questionnaire was used during their recruitment. The questionnaire asked the prospective participants to disclose their proficiency through introspective questions and correlating data. On one hand, it asked them to tell their medium of instruction in school/ college and language use at home on the other it asked them to grade themselves on their ability to perform various language

tasks. As revealed by the questionnaire, most of the participants were natives of the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Delhi. They had been instructed in Hindi, English or Hindi-English mixed codes and had no difficulty in carrying out tasks like identifying ungrammaticality, understanding movies dialogues, interpreting hoardings or posters, product instructions, guiding map to somebody over phone etc. All participants belonged to the University of Hyderabad and use Hindi and English on a daily basis.

Materials and presentation

The materials for this experiment consisted of monolingual and code-mixed jokes. Code mixed jokes belong to a category of jokes wherein more than one language is involved. These jokes emerge from language contact, which is an ever-expanding phenomenon today. An argument that might challenge this category is that the jokes belonging to this category are often translatable into a single language. However, the very fact that they occur on a regular basis in code-mixed form qualifies them as suitable candidates for this category. The bilinguals experience these jokes in code-mixed form mostly. Therefore, it is important to study these jokes as they can provide a better picture of the humour processing in bilingual persons.

While processing the code mixed jokes, a bilingual has to switch from one language to the other. The mixing of lexicon or switch of systems can have facilitative or even inhibitory effects, for it involves linguistic as well as cultural implications. This experiment tries to study if this switch affects the manner in which bilinguals rate the code mixed jokes.

This experiment made use of forty audio jokes out of which twenty served as items and the remaining twenty acted as distracters. The jokes used in the experiment played for same length and appeared in a random order. The jokes in this experiment appeared in Hindi, English and Hindi-English code-mixed forms. Of the 20 items, 10 jokes were code-mixed while 3 jokes were in monolingual Hindi code and 7 jokes were in monolingual English code. Since the two language codes involved here follow different scripts for writing (English following the Roman script whereas Hindi following the Devanagari script) all the jokes were recorded in audio files so that the knowledge of script and the orthographic length of jokes do not affect the processing time and response. The recordings were done in a single voice to maintain uniformity in sound play and avoid the variation in response emerging due to change in voice. The random order of the display of items as well as fillers was generated by the program itself. The subjects rated the jokes for funniness on a scale of 1-4 (first task), identified the word or phrase that made them funny (second task) and explained why they found them funny (third task). The first task bases itself on the native speakers' ability to attest the grammaticality of a given sentence. Here, native/ proficient speakers would be able to rate the funniness of the jokes played to them, find out the humorous element in the joke and account for funniness of the jokes.

Result and discussion

The data obtained from the experiment shows that the bilinguals enjoy code-mixed jokes more than monolingual jokes. They have marked code-mixed jokes as 'not funny' or 'little funny' on fewer occasion than their monolingual counterparts. However, they have marked the code-mixed jokes as funny or very funny more often than the monolingual jokes. They have given higher ratings to code-mixed jokes than monolingual jokes.

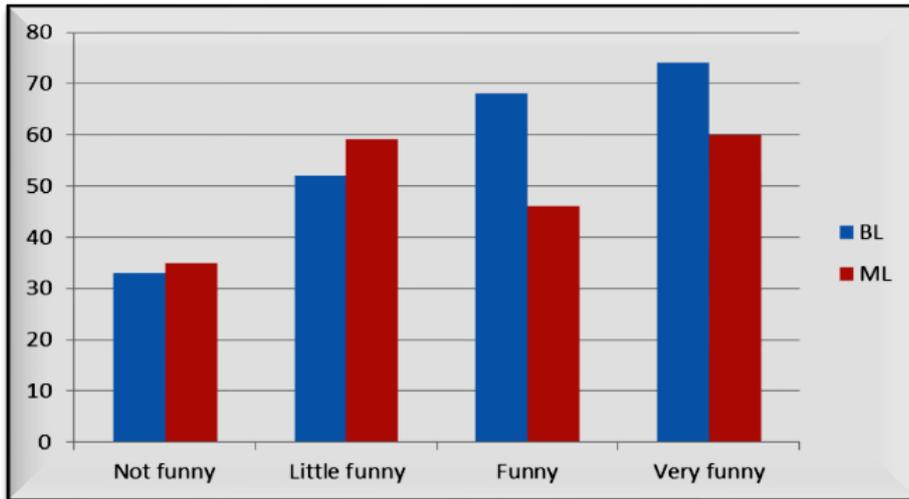


Illustration 5.7: Comparison of ratings on bilingual (BL) and monolingual (ML) jokes

The data indicates that bilinguals find code mixed jokes funnier than monolingual jokes as they have rated bilingual jokes more often higher than monolingual jokes. The accuracy level in punchline detection was same in Hindi and English. The accuracy level in punchline detection between monolingual jokes and bilingual jokes varied slightly. The response data suggest that subjects were more accurate in detecting punchline of monolingual jokes than in detecting the punchline of bilingual jokes. However, this difference is not very significant.

As discussed above the third task required the subjects to explain why they found the jokes very funny, funny, little funny or not funny. This task was essential in order to ensure that the response they were giving emerged from the processing of jokes, not from an analogy drawn on the displayed items. The response they gave to this task was diverse in nature. The following categories emerged from their response to the third task: word play, ignorance, and inadvertent.

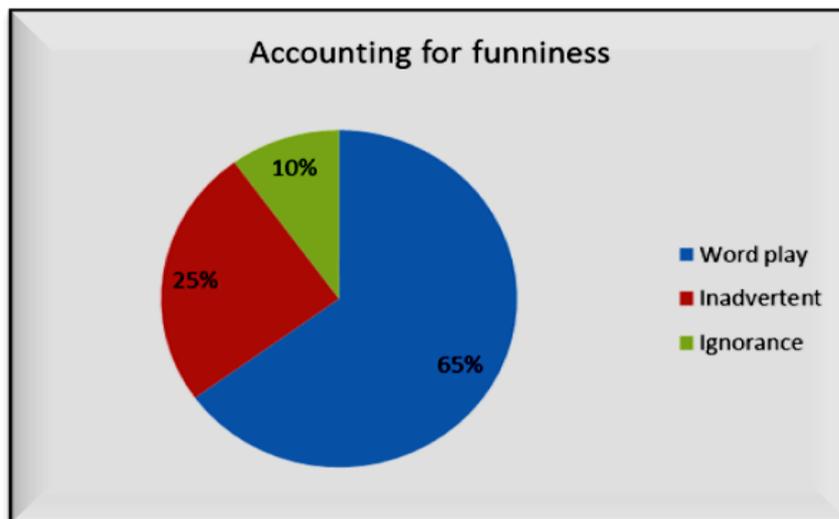


Illustration 5.8: Accounting for funniness

As the response data suggests, the processing of humour by bilingual subjects varies according to language mode of the bilinguals. The appreciation of monolingual jokes also differs from that of bilingual jokes. In this paper, we have tried to explore the effect of code mixing on the experience of funniness. In this experimental study, we found that the bilinguals give higher ratings to code-mixed jokes than the monolingual jokes. This proves the fact that bilinguals do not show preference for language with respect to humour use. It also proves that code mixing does not result in inhibitory effects on the humour experience of the bilingual participants. The bilingual participants' identification of punchline in code-mixed humorous stimuli did not differ significantly from that of the monolingual humorous stimuli.

The present study proves that the humour experience of bilingual population is not only unique in its own but also that the bilingual population enjoys the bilingual jokes more than monolingual jokes. As indicated in the title of this paper, these are some rudimentary findings as it represents a small group of twenty participants. A larger sample size would have provided more strength to the findings. This ideas generated from this study may be tested on code-mixed jokes from language pairs other than English and Hindi.

5.5.7. Experiment 7: Processing verbal humour arising out of metalinguistic information

Introduction

The metalinguistic humour as discussed in the earlier chapters focuses on the behaviour of various components of language and causes amusement by presenting them in creative ways. This set of verbal humour exploits the polysemous use of words, abbreviations, definitions, blends etc. What is vital to this set of humour phenomena is its focus on subtle ways in which the human language behaves. For the non-professionals, this kind of humour is nothing extra-ordinary but for professionals in Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics the metalinguistic humour mirrors the way human language works. Thereby it serves an important means to describe the behaviour of language and teach them to pupils. This section presents an experiment involving instances of humour that depend on metalinguistic information as processed and explained by participants from Linguistics and English Language Teaching.

Objective

The objective of this experiment is to know in what ways the conceptual familiarity helps or hinders the enjoyment of humour coming from metalinguistic sources.

Task

The task for this experiment included ratings of the humorous stimuli.

Participants

Forty research students, (twenty each from Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching) volunteered to participate in this exclusive experiment. All the participants have received training in language teaching and testing during their course work. Therefore, all the participants were familiar with the formal meanings and definitions of various terminologies that would occur in the experiment.

Materials and presentation

The test materials included humour arising from metalinguistic sources such as deft definitions, jokes and puns that reflect upon language itself and cause amusement. This experiment included, funny abbreviations, acronyms, hilarious definitions and creative blends all of which focus on some aspect in which the human language functions.

Result and discussion

The familiarity with humorous stimuli can have facilitative as well as inhibitory effect on the individuals. The data showed no significant leanings on either side.

5.5.8. Experiment 8: Processing oxymoron, joke cycles and quotes

Introduction

Instances of oxymoron, joke-cycle and quotes have not received enough attention in experiments. Structurally and conceptually they qualify as sub-types of verbal humour, however, due to their mini size they have not received the kind of inclusion that jokes get. This experiment tests the processing of these instances of mini entertainment discourse and tries to find out what impact familiarity can have on the processing.

Objectives

- a) To investigate the effect of the familiar and novel in processing of para-jokes and joke-cycles.
- b) To compare the validity of ranking tasks against rating tasks.

Task

This experiment required the participants to rank the sets of stimuli that consisted funny oxymoron, joke cycles and witty quotes.

Participants

Ninety-four participants ranked twelve sets verbal humour each of which contained an oxymoron, a joke cycle and a humorous quote. Among the three forms in each set, the participants ranked them as most funny, average funny and least funny.

Materials and presentation

The materials for this experiment included humorous oxymoron, joke cycles and witty quotes. The test items appeared to the test takers in twelve sets of three items comprising of an oxymoron, a humorous quote, and a joke cycle.

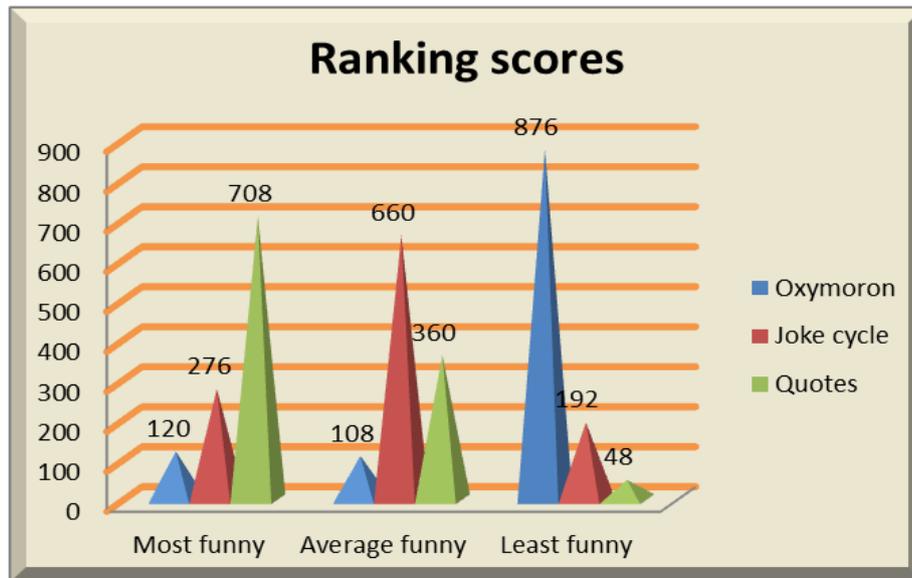


Illustration 5.9: Ranking of stimuli

Result and discussion

The above graph shows the cumulative scores of the three forms of verbal humour. The data indicated that the participants placed humorous quotes higher than joke cycle and oxymoron.

5.5.9. Experiment 9: Processing incomplete instantiations

Introduction

As discussed in chapter three the Theory of Lexical Priming advanced by Michael Hoey in 2005 is very important to understand the regular and irregular collocations of words. It is important because it deviates from the conventional ideas of grammatical structures and word grammar. It is also important because it takes into consideration what is compatible, and criticises the approaches that have focussed on grammatical and attestable usages. This experiment has tried to test the validity of the theory of lexical priming. In addition, it also tried to study the variation in the difficulties experienced during completing the verbal humour that lacked either simple words or the punchline itself.

Objectives

- To investigate cooperation in humorous interactions and examine the theory of Lexical Priming.
- To examine the difficulties involved in completing instances of verbal humour that lack some words in general and the punchline in particular.

Tasks

This experiment required the participants to carry out the following tasks:

- Fill-up the blanks and complete sentences embodying verbal humour.
- Rating of difficulty level.

Participants

Sixty-seven participants undertook this experiment involving completion of the sentences and rating the difficulty involved therein. Accordingly, the participants classified and

quantified the difficulty they experienced while providing suitable words and expressions to incomplete instances of verbal humour. For the experiment, the following scale is applicable: no difficulty, little difficulty and high difficulty.

Materials and presentation

The materials for this experiment included jokes extracted from the book *Grammar with Laughter* by George Woolard. Originally, the jokes in this book appear in the form of grammar exercises. The experimenter remodelled them to suit the requirements of the experiment.

Result and discussion

In cloze tests including humorous contents the structural ambiguities and syntactic complexities proved facilitative. Whereas, the ambiguities related to polysemy of words and lexical complexities proved inhibitory. The time-line graph shows that the participants across categories experienced more difficulties with polysemous and homonymous nature of words than the other forms. Certain words and phrases in the speech acts are more salient than others are. They are the ones that constitute funniness in humorous interactions and humour style of individuals. Their absence may disqualify the speech acts as humorous instantiations. This experiment containing cloze tests proves the validity of two theories: at the linguistic level it validates the theory of lexical priming advanced by Hoey (2006) and at the cognitive level it validates the relevance of marked informativeness and optimal innovativeness advanced by Giora (2003). The participants reported of higher difficulties in completing verbal humour that lacked the punchline than completing the verbal humour that lacked some unimportant words. This reaffirms the significance of the punchline and proves the earlier stated idea that every instance of humour has a template and a core.

5.5.10. Experiment 10: Effect of humour mode and the recall of humour

Introduction

As it has occurred in earlier discussion, humour mode is an important factor in the perception and appreciation of humour. It is beyond question that the perception of and appreciation of humorous stimuli necessitate certain cognitive abilities. However, so far no ability has proved to be the single determining criterion. In addition, it has also proved difficult to determine what causes the difference in the degree of funniness in humorous interactions.

In the context of the present experiment, humour mode appears to be the plausible reason. The present experiment uses various humorous and non-humorous stimuli to study how humour mode influences the experience of funniness among the people. Humour recall is a tricky issue because it requires the participants to have a good memory and often throws diametrically opposite results. On various interactive situations, people are able to recall an instance of humour that is related to the topic of the discussion. However, it is difficult for people to repeat humour in general. Therefore this experiment also tries to study the factors that play assisting or inhibitory role in the need for humour recall.

There are two hypotheses relevant in the context of humour recall and the present experiment tries to test them. The hypotheses are as following:

- a) Humour mode is an aid to humour recall. When a person is in the humour mode, s/he is more likely to enjoy the instances of humour and it is easier for him/her to recall humour or predict punchlines.
- b) Humour recall has a pattern. The recall performance is higher for the similar and familiar forms than the novel forms.

Objectives

- a) To analyse the factors that may influence humour recalls
- b) To study the impact of humour mode on the experience of funniness and humour recall.
- c) To know the effect of mode of discourse on humour processing and the experience of funniness.
- d) To examine how the familiarity with the stimuli processed affects humour recall.

Task

This experiment involved rating and completion tasks. The participants for this experiment at first needed to read the humorous stimuli appearing sequentially and grade them for funniness. Then, the participants completed the humorous stimuli that were incomplete due to a word or phrase missing in them.

Participants

Forty post graduate students participated in this experiment. All persons who took part in pilot study as well as the main experiment belong to the University of Hyderabad. The set of 20 participants had an equal number of males and females, all ranging between 20-30 years of age.

Materials and presentation

The material for this experiment included the instances of verbal humour that received high ratings during the pilot study and annotations. The materials included jokes, puns, riddles, tongue twisters and repeated use of counterfactual headlines and witty one-liners. The participants read the humorous instantiations and rated them for funniness. The instances of counterfactual headlines and witty one-liners kept coming on and on.

Result and discussion

Personal affiliations with certain issues and interest in various topics can influence the enjoyment of funniness of verbal humour and its subsequent recall. However, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent this would be true. It is evident from this experiment that humour mode is an important factor experience of funniness arising out of humorous stimuli whereas it is inconclusive whether humour mode also has a similar impact on humour recall. In addition, the experiment data did not confirm if familiarity with the stimuli can positively influence the recall or predict of humorous instantiations.

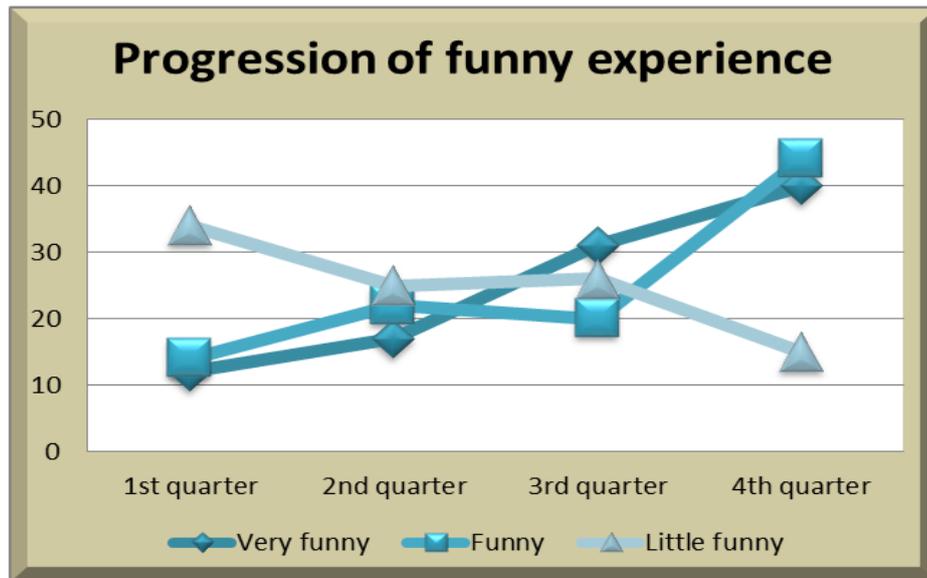


Illustration 5.10: Progression of funny experience

This experiment tried to explore the answer to the following questions:

- How does the mode of discourse affect the experience of funniness in humorous stimuli?
- How does the type of stimuli experienced during humour processing affect humour recall?

The progression of the experience of funniness in the above illustration confirms the impact of humour mode. It is evident from the data that the participants experienced more fun in the later part of the experiment because they could get into the humour mode. However, the experiment could not establish any significant effect of the stimuli in humour recall. The participants were able to recall the stimuli they had processed earlier but found it a little cumbersome. In this case, it would be more appropriate to conduct a response time experiment to observe if this form of presentation of stimuli causes a processing delay.

5.6. Summary

An obvious shortcoming of the earlier works on humour is the insular approach adopted by them. Most of them considered various instances of humour as distinct and failed to locate the similarities that could put them under one classification. One conclusion that is not hard to accept is that there cannot be a single doctrine to analyse and understand the cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour. This chapter looked at the cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour from divergent viewpoints. It focused on three aspects of the cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour. First, it discussed the issue at hand and the variations in the idea about various terminologies and expressions that are relevant to the issue at hand. It analysed the theoretical aspects that are analytical and speculative. Second, it prepared the ground for a trait-based profiling to account for individual person's differences concerning humour use and response to humour. In this context, it introduced and elaborated the schemes of FIRO-B and JaI. Third, it presented the finding from a host of empirical studies on the assorted forms of verbal humour. According to the findings of this chapter, the following points are worth consideration:

- a) Humour processing, including the identification of humorous stimuli, comprehending the wholly and responding to them has various cognitive determinants.
- b) Creativity, unfamiliarity, cognitive ease etc. can play dichotomous roles in humour processing. It is difficult to decide whether their presence is facilitative or restrictive.
- c) Humour comprehension and response to humour may not depend fully on sense of humour or humour quotient of the individuals. Rather, humour orientation and humour mode might affect the participants' behaviour significantly.
- d) Humour research has been in need for a new scale. JaI may fit the bill.
- e) The individual differences are researchable through suitable techniques. In qualitative approaches and mixed method experiments, the trait-based approach is more reliable than the type-based approach.
- f) Concerning the trait-based approaches, the FIRO-B and JaI scales are highly suitable for experimental research on humour. These tools are able to specify and explain variations among the individual participants and between different groups of participants.

The idea of humour mode is an achievement of the present research. Humour mode explains why an individual may not appreciate a piece of humour despite every other factor working well. Along the same lines, it explains why sometime people find certain things amusing despite the fact that there is nothing unusual in it. Humour mode enables the individuals to initiate as well as identify and appreciate humorous interactions. Concerning the comprehension as well as production of humour, a person in humour mode has advantage over somebody who is not in humour mode. Humour mode prepares the individuals to expect unpredictable, unimaginable and logical defying possibilities.

It is important to corroborate the theoretical ideas with empirical findings. The application of FIRO-B and JaI is highly suitable for arriving at the personality traits of the participants. The experiments in the preceding sections have shown how variations may arise in the experience of funniness due to variations in the personality types and humour orientation. More experiments should take place to further strengthen these conclusions.

ⁱ The expression 'cognitive mechanisms' refers to the processes involving identification of stimulus, its comprehension within a context and its appreciation. It is not co-terminus with Logical Mechanisms of the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH).

ⁱⁱ Veale (2004) considers incongruity an epiphenomenon and not the root cause of humour/funniness.

ⁱⁱⁱ The expression humour mode has not occurred in the humour research literature on a serious note. In the present study it refers to a prerequisite for the experience of funniness. If the interlocutor is not in the humour mode, s/he would not enjoy the humorous instantiations in spite of all other factors having been in place.

^{iv} The term personality is an abstract idea, a hypothetical construct to describe people and differentiate among them. The idea of personality is useful in making predictions about an individual's behaviour. See Martin (2007: 190) for details.

^v See Schnell (2009) and Walterman & Rogers (2009)

^{vi} See appendix 2a and appendix 2b for details on FIRO-B questionnaire and FIRO-B score calculator.

^{vii} Source: Walterman, Judith A. & Jenny Rogers. 2009. *Introduction to the FIRO instrument*. New York: CPP Inc.

^{viii} See Appendix 3 for JaI questionnaire, gradation technique and score interpretations.

^{ix} Also spelled as *tendencious* humour. This term became popular with Freud (1905).

^x Reader's Digest December 2014.

^{xi} Reader's Digest December 2014.

^{xii} Source: Dynel (2009: 1)

Chapter 6

Conclusions

6.1. General discussion

Humour and its sub-fields have come a long way to establishing themselves as legitimate candidates in academic research. Though Humour Studies is still in a formative stage, the trends in quantitative and qualitative research taking place on various forms of humour show positive developments of the field. Scholars across very diverse disciplines such as Linguistics, Literature, Philosophy, Anthropology, Communication, and Performing Arts, just to name a few, have started to acknowledge the need for serious study of humour and its sub-fields. Among the sub-fields of humour, verbal humour has emerged as a favourite genre for linguists and literary scholars because it is the meeting point for the reflective and social linguistics on the one hand and literary and rhetoric researchers on the other. Concerning the employment of verbal humour in academic research, a notable change has taken place. Earlier, verbal humour served as examples to explicate various concepts. However, now various forms of verbal humour have started to find recognition as researchable issues in themselves. It seems appropriate to say that sooner than later Humour Studies will acquire the recognition as a discipline like Linguistics, Psychology, Philosophy, Gender Studies, Film Studies and Aesthetics. Concerning this, the study of verbal humour is set to acquire a distinct recognition and attract immense scholarly participations. If that were true, studies concentrating on the linguistic and cognitive aspects of verbal humour would aid the humour researchers in substantial ways.

This thesis looked into the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour, and the present chapter discusses its conclusions. At first, it examines some core issues and intuitive questions that concern the use of humour in social interactions. The answer to these questions shall come from the judicious mixing of ideas and evidence emerging from the empirical data and experimental studies embodied in the preceding chapters. After these questions, it presents topic-specific conclusions drawn from the five chapters that precede this one. Next, it discusses the specific outcomes the research. Then, it highlights some unresolved issues and provides ideas for future research on verbal humour. Finally, it presents a summary of the chapter.

What is humour all about? Stating plainly, humour is about using forms that can mean two or more incompatible, unexpected and hilarious meanings. Humour often causes the experience of funniness and evokes the physical response in the form of laughter. Again, what will constitute humour? One can approach this question in two contrasting ways; (a) Make an infinite inventory all instances of humour and (b) Find out the common threads in humour, the universal features of all humour. Obviously, the second approach is more practical.

Why verbal humour for this research? The choice of verbal humour is for several reasons. The earlier chapters have mentioned many of them in intricate details. Following are some more reasons that qualify verbal humour in linguistic research and justify the present work:

- a) It reflects on everyday language use.
- b) It reflects figurative language processing in typical situations
- c) To scholars their presence in abundance seems to have trivialised the linguistic and cognitive specialities that they embody. That is why there is alarmingly small research on the linguistic and cognitive aspects of verbal humour.

- d) A broader account of mini texts of amusement.
- e) An analysis of entertainment discourse at intra-personal, interpersonal and inter-cultural levels.
- f) These questions are interesting as well as relevant but too complicated to address in a satisfactory way.
- g) They throw an apparent substance and then connect it with unexpected possibility.
- h) The use of humour in a social situation often manifests oppressions due to power differences existing among the interlocutors.
- i) Language remains the key ingredient in the study of humour. Conversely, Humour Studies complements and informs Linguistics and Translation Studies and so do they.

What is the role of humour in human communication system? Humour plays a substantial role in the human communication system. Primarily it is a great stress reliever and facilitates rapport building in social interactions. Secondly, it teases out inhibitions and aids people to talk about topics that would be difficult. It shows playfulness, creative expression and alternative approaches to an issue.

Why do human beings laugh at various instantiations of verbal humour? Laughter is perhaps the most natural response to humorous stimuli. Humans laugh at jokes because they find them funny. The examples of verbal humour such as jokes, wits, ironies and satires form an important constituent of human interactions and the laughter resulting from them acts as an excellent stress reliever.

Why do people laugh at some forms of humour and not at others? People's response to an instance of humour depends on their orientation towards it. Their orientation is the product of various factors such as situation, mood, setting, interlocutors, genre, etc.

How are humour, intelligence and creativity related? There is an obvious link between humour, intelligence and creativity. It appears an apparent fact that the instances of humour in general and verbal humour in particular require mental abilities that are higher than that involved in typical, non-humorous interactions.

Is humour creativity a special sub-type of general creativity? Humour creativity may resemble general creativity that paintings and art forms contain. However, it is special in that it involves language use and manipulations therein.

Why humour experiments? The human beings are expected to be able to identify the structural niceties of various instances of verbal humour in the languages they know and link themselves with the laughable aspects of the cultural associations they have.

Is there a grammar of verbal humour? If yes then what are the contours of this grammar, and what are its scope and limitations? The answer to this question is yes. However, it is hard to draw a prescriptive line to follow. Ambiguity and incongruity in meaning arising due to the polysemous and metaphoric use of language are essential to humour generation and humour comprehension.

What is the nature of the punchline? Is the punchline or humorous meaning emergent or constituent part of the humorous instantiation? If the answer to this question were known one could easily explain and predict the likeliness of an interaction turning humorous. However, not only such a development has remained a distant dream, but there is no compositional theory of humour. Structurally, punchline appears at the end of the humorous speech acts. However, the position of the punchline is not compulsorily final always as some instances of verbal humour may have it in earlier and yet some may have

it together depending on the genre. From semantic and pragmatic standpoints, the punchlines embody a contradiction between the meanings at the surface level and the deep level. What could be the cognitive aspects of the punchline? In cognitive linguistic perspectives, the punchline is unpredictable and therefore it often comes as a surprise. Moreover, the punchline necessitates a harmonious blend of the new/foregrounded meaning into an old/obvious one.

The present research is an attempt in that direction, and it sets out to discuss the conclusions of the research embodied in this thesis. What follows is conclusions on each chapter in a chronological order.

6.2. Conclusions of chapter one

Humour in interactions is one of the defining endowments of the human communication systems. It is a technology or a sub-technology of language that is as old as the human language itself. Arguably, it has been evolving in form and expression. Some commonly agreeable points about verbal humour include the following:

- a) they are laughable,
- b) they are tellable,
- c) they are recyclable,
- d) they are multifaceted, and
- e) they are researchable

The first chapter presented verbal humour as a hybrid genre that merits cross-disciplinary and transdisciplinary research. After justifying the topic, this chapter discussed the methodological and conceptual frameworks, presented the objectives of the works this thesis has carried out and discussed the scope and limitations of the present research. A linguistic research on verbal humour involves transcending from amusing curiosities to reflections on the working of natural languages. Such research also transcends from laughing matters to linguistic theories. This chapter demonstrated that verbal humour has emerged as new vistas of research in Linguistics as its socio-pragmatic and psycholinguistic antecedents are vital to understanding the working of language in human societies. An important point that emerged in this chapter is that verbal humour is not a synonymous alternative for the category joke. Instead, it is a very rich genre that has various sub-genres and joke is one among them. The sub-genres of verbal humour include puns, riddles, tongue twisters, one-liners, counterfactual headlines, spoofs, parody, etc. Undoubtedly, verbal humour and its sub-genres are researchable within Linguistics. Alternatively, this chapter also demonstrated that in Humour Studies Linguistics is a dependable component. An important finding of this chapter is that the use of verbal humour involves metalinguistic awareness. Therefore, research on verbal humour from linguistic and cognitive standpoints augurs well for it.

6.3. Conclusions of chapter two

This chapter discussed the scholarship available on verbal humour within the purview of Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology. Since humour has flummoxed the scholars and laymen for long, there is a stunningly large quantity and appreciably wide variety of scholarships available on humour. However, its sub-field, the verbal humour, did not receive enough attention in these works. With the birth of newer perspectives on

language, the need has arisen to shift from reflective and formal aspects of linguistic analysis to social and interactional aspects. Despite the deluge, the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour remained in auxiliary status. The lack of sufficient literature on Linguistic and Cognitive aspects of humour indicates that early scholars in these disciplines did not find verbal humour readily submitting to scientific inquiry. For these scholars, the functions of humour seemed decipherable, but the mechanisms of humour proved intractable.

To develop a comprehensive understanding of the various dimensions of verbal humour this chapter undertook a discussion on the diverse contexts of verbal humour. Understandably, verbal humour has contexts that are relevant to exceedingly diverse streams of scientific inquiry. This chapter discussed various forms of verbal humour and illustrated them with ample examples.

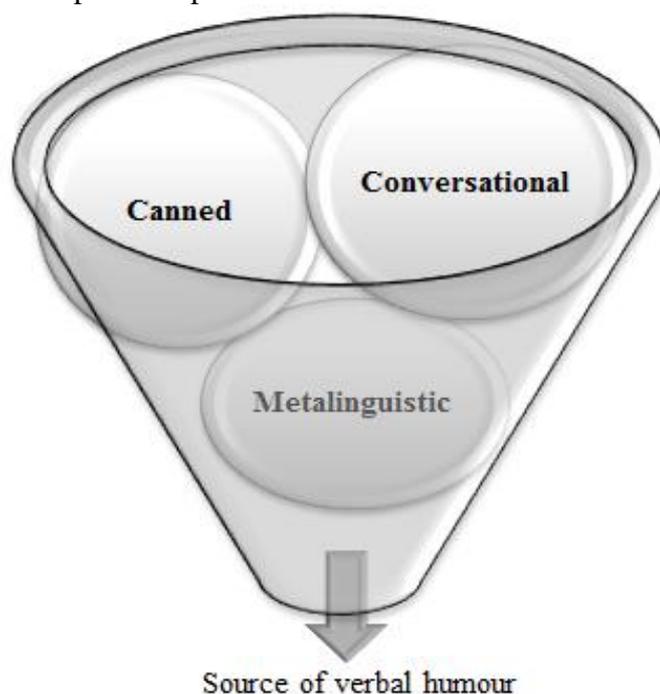


Illustration 6.1

After discussing the concept of humour and its classifications, this chapter presented verbal humour in the context of meaning creation and translation. It offered a detailed discussion on developmental humour and the humour landscape in India. The developmental humour is a transition point to puns, wordplays, tongue twisters and riddles while the humour landscape is the transition from monolingual perspectives on humour to bilingual discourse on it. Humour research has benefitted from the scholarly contributions of several stalwarts from diverse disciplines like Psychology, Linguistics, Anthropology, Philosophy, etc. However, Koestler (1964), Raskin (1985 & 2008), Attardo (1991 & 1994), Veale (2004), Ritchie (1999, 2000 & 2001), Giora (1997 & 2003), Dynel (2009 & 2012), Ruch (2007), and Ziv (1884 & 1988) have stimulated more discussions, debates and research than the rest. The final two-three decades of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century have witnessed a tremendous growth in research on some fundamental aspects of human existence. The pace of research aiming at language, culture and cognition, for instance, has also accelerated. Nevertheless, this is not true for humour and laughter. This remark does not undermine the noteworthy ideas that have emerged from individuals' and institutional research on humour and laughter.

6.4. Conclusions of chapter three

Along with art, aesthetics, creativity and pleasure humour is easier to experience than to define or quantify. Everyone knows if it exists but cannot provide the necessary and sufficient criteria for it to exist. Besides, the perception concerning this phenomenon varies from discipline to discipline and from individual to individual. This chapter put together various theories that have addressed the phenomenon of humour or some aspects of it. It also presented the working of humour theories and other ad hoc theories in the context of verbal humour.

Scholars have contemplated on humour for a long time. The early treatises on theatrical plays in Europe and India discuss laughter in detail providing ample evidence that humour was important to them. However, most of these scholars have treated humour and laughter as one. Therefore, the early theories of humour were actually theories of laughter. Obviously, these theories interpreted humour from superiority-inferiority angles. The theories of humour started growing during the late medieval and early modern times, and presently, there are numerous theories of humour. It will not be possible to understand the nuances of the humour theories without classifying them according to their focus and the similarities of a hypothesis. Accordingly, Attardo (1994) offered a three-way classification comprising of (a) cognitive, (b) social, and (c) psychoanalytical. Taking into account the focus of humour theories and the kind of description they provide, the present research classifies the theories of humour into three groups as follows: (a) Superiority-Inferiority Theories, (b) Aggression-Relief Theories, and (c) Cognitive-Linguistic Theories. These classifications primarily help in understanding them and aligning them according to their focus. There is no restriction on any theory falling under two classifications. This thesis is about the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour. Apparently, the Cognitive-Linguistic theories gained larger description than the other two. Among these theories, the following theories have been very impactful:

- a) Incongruity Resolution Theory
- b) Surprise Disambiguation Theory
- c) Conceptual Blending
- d) Relevance Theory
- e) Optimum Innovation Hypothesis
- f) Cooperative Principles and Maxim of conversation
- g) Theory of Lexical Priming

The final section of this discussion threw light on the gaps in the humour theories. Some shortcomings associated with these theories are as follows:

- (a) A number of them are ad hoc theories and not humour theories.
- (b) There is still no comprehensive account of all kinds of humour. At maximum, these theories can provide explanations for specific sub-genres of verbal humour.
- (c) They have discussed the same concept using different terms and thereby complicated the issue rather than simplifying it.

An important point concerning the theories of humour is that they do not discard other theories. Despite the enduring significance and large scale popularity of the theories of humour by Sigmund Freud, Victor Raskin, Salvatore Attardo, Greame Ritchie and Rachel Giora the final word is yet to come. The possibilities for theoretical development are still immense.

6.5. Conclusions of chapter four

This chapter concentrated on the linguistic architecture verbal humour and the verbal gymnastics lying therein. It first discussed concept as a genre in its own right and widened its scope to accommodate various other phenomena that show conceptual resemblances. It also presented various instances of verbal humour to explicate the working of it at the macroscopic and microscopic levels. The principle of arbitrariness and the principle of compositionality are two dichotomous approaches to study the natural language. Drawing from it, this chapter examined whether instances of verbal humour are arbitrary or there bear some demonstrable compositionality.

Verbal humour succeeds because of its internal structure. The term ‘inherent structure’ or ‘internal structure’ of the verbal humour refers to its linguistic as well as conceptual organisations. Alterations in the internal/inherent structure may significantly affect the funniness of jokes and thereby alter its class too. This chapter attempted to present insights on the structural build-up of the verbal humour and looked at it from two vantage points. The first was conceptual that rests at the macroscopic level and includes the following elements:



Illustration 6.2

The second was procedural that rests at the microscopic level and includes the following:



Illustration 6.3

Naturally, this chapter utilised various repositories and corpora of humour to assemble various kinds of verbal humour and classified them according to structural or conceptual similarities. This methodology also followed a descriptor for the data.

The corpus of verbal humour provides enough evidence to claim that the pairs of binary opposites such as meaningfulness and meaninglessness, politeness and impoliteness, translatability and untranslatability, and relevance and irrelevance are evident in all its sub-genres. Therefore, the humorous effect is achievable in the language with the employment of \pm meaningful, \pm polite, \pm translatable and \pm relevant data. It also entails that the individual elements of these pairs exist on two extreme ends of a continuum.

The intricacies involved in it range from understanding the meaning of the term to evolving ways to analyse it in demonstrable and replicable ways. Concerning language habits and the use of humour, the following inter-related factors assume significance:

- a) The use of humour reflects the socio-cultural aspects of a speech community
- b) Linguistic habits greatly influence the humour use of a speech community.
- c) Humour relay and humour experiencing as defamiliarising acts.
- d) The readability aspect of various forms of verbal humour is important.

6.6. Conclusions of chapter five

Verbal humour is so prevalent and comes so naturally that people do not realise the complexities that the human mind has to deal with while producing it or recognising it or even responding to it. This chapter explored the cognitive panoramas of verbal humour. It approached this issue from two converging methodologies. First, it examined the discussions available on the cognitive linguistics of humour. Second, it carried out a set of empirical studies to understand how different kinds of verbal humour impact on the experience of amusement and funniness.

In many cultural traditions, an individual's use of humour defines his/her personality. These traditional beliefs project the following underlying assumptions: (a) Humans like to employ the kind of humour that suits their taste and (b) The ability to perceive humour is an indicator of the individual's intellectual abilities.

An important dimension of the chapter 'The Cognitive Mechanisms of Verbal Humour' is the empirical study through a set of experiments. These experiments have in them the following essential components: an introduction to the issue, problem & hypotheses related to the specific types of verbal humour, materials & platform to conduct the experiment, design & procedure suitable for the test materials & participants and results & discussion on the data. The inclusion of these experiments in this chapter provides direction to the theoretical debate. However, the experiments are neither easy to construct nor easy to interpret.

A notable discrepancy existing in most studies that have reported findings related to the cognitive aspects of verbal humour is that they have based their assumptions and findings on experiments on a certain type of humour. Arguably, when the cognitive factors are many, there is a need to assess the working of different factors individually through various experiments. This chapter reported a set of experiments that studied the appreciation of different forms of verbal humour in different conditions.

Concerning the preparation and execution of the experiments, the research ensured that no factor other than the ones under observation influenced the results. The researcher took all necessary steps while selecting the experiment materials, designing the experiment, conducting the pilot study and the main experiment to prevent personal bias from entering into the responses. Neither the subjects' personal whims and affiliations nor the experimenters' own ideological or subjective beliefs could influence the response. The researcher gave utmost care during the preparation and execution of the experiment to prevent the response from becoming non-evaluative. The researcher put in all efforts to ensure that the emotional baggage usually associated with humorous elements does not affect the response by taking the participants in confidence and by introducing the materials like day-to-day playful interactions.

This chapter projected trait-based profiling approach for classifying the participants in Psycholinguistic experiments. It also tested the feasibility of mixed methods as an alternative to the diametrically opposite choices of quantitative and qualitative methods that are usually applicable to research. Accordingly, this chapter implemented Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation – Behaviour (FIRO-B) and Jokes and I (JaI) as instruments to study the relationship between the personality types and the orientation towards humour use.

The classification offered by FIRO-B and JaI helped in an immense way. An important conclusion of this research is that the theories based on linguistic or conceptual structures do not adequately explain the variations in individuals' response to humorous

stimuli. Concerning this, the present research concludes that such variations occur due to individuals' orientation towards humour.

Following are the salient features of JaI:

- a) It is the first of its kind and has a simple design
- b) It is easy to administer, and the possibility of interference is minimum
- c) It focuses on the linguistic and cognitive aspects
- d) It can coordinate with other tools for validity and correlates
- e) It is non-deterministic as its objective is to know the participant's humour orientation
- f) It is explorative implying that it has no right or wrong answer

Two remarkable achievements of the involvement of cognitive approach to the linguistics of verbal humour are the classification of humorous texts and the profiling of human subjects. The classification is helpful because it treats newer and distinct instantiations of humour into new categories and clubs the similar ones as tokens of a common category. Similarly, the human subjects who participate in psycholinguistic experiments used to fall under the age and sex classes. The involvement of cognitive linguistics into humour comprehension tests resulted in profiling of participants according to their orientation towards humour. One of the experiments concentrated at the psycholinguistic correlates of language proficiency, humour processing and humour quotient and orientations in Hindi-English bilinguals. It also studied the effects of bilingualism in processing monolingual and bilingual jokes. The experiment on the processing of visual-verbal humour is first of its kind. Though some studies have reported the processing of cartoons and humorous images, this experiment was distinct for the fact that it focused on the combined effect of image and text in humorous instantiations.

6.7. Specific outcomes

The research in the preceding chapters has highlighted some important points. Some conclusions that are not hard to accept are as follows:

- a) The structure and information content of verbal humour is researchable, and it requires the frequent participation of researchers from Linguistics and its allied disciplines
- b) Humour Studies deserves a full-fledged disciplinary status.
- c) Verbal humour refers to a wide range of linguistic phenomena. Research involving verbal humour should not confine to jokes only. Conforming to the argument that verbal humour necessitates language manipulations, puns, riddles, tongue-twisters, one-liners, quotes, etc. naturally qualify as forms of verbal humour.
- d) No existing theory can alone account for all forms of verbal humour. To explain them, the researchers need to classify them as a particular sub-type of verbal humour and examine them under the lens of an applicable theory.
- e) A comprehensive understanding of how verbal humour works in everyday interactions requires an eclectic blending of diverse theories that apply to both language and humour.
- f) The structure of verbal humour exhibits manipulations on all perceivable levels of language use. The data on verbal humour provide ample evidence for manipulations of sounds, letters, affixes, words, phrases and sentences.

- g) Among the sub-genres of verbal humour, there exists a perceivable and demonstrable ranking. Accordingly, the participants' response suggests that they enjoy these sub-genres in the following order: multimodal humour, witty one-liners, funny headlines, jokes, puns, riddles, tongue twisters.
- h) This research claims that canned, conversational and metalinguistic aspects are sources or points of origin of verbal humour not micro or macro sub-classes of it.
- i) Individuals develop orientations towards the use of various forms of verbal humour. Accordingly, some may like a certain form while others may not. Therefore, experiments involving human subjects need to classify the participants in some definable ways. The use of FIRO-B and JaI in this research proved to be highly useful.
- j) Verbal humour often throws the dichotomous options between literal versus non-literal (humorous) language use. In order to comprehend it in general interactions, one needs to possess the ability to use and process figurative language use, especially metaphors and metonymy.

6.8. Unresolved issues for future research

The theoretical and intellectual developments concerning humour have built a coherent network of knowledge that can significantly contribute to the understanding of the functioning of the human mind. Though humour research aims at fullness and accuracy of knowledge about the phenomena of humour, a lot remains unaccomplished. A pertinent need of the research is to engage and extract the diverse instances of humour from day-to-day interactions. The terms *engage* and *extract* here refer to an integrative practice of the following pairs: assemble and amass, experience and observe, relay and communicate and rewrite and create. The Researchers should focus on the possibilities of making Humour Studies a new stream of knowledge an academic discipline subject that is independent of other disciplines, but however, with constant give and take from these disciplines. They should also ensure that such an attempt does not disturb the interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of Humour. The scholars engaged in the Languages Sciences should concentrate more on verbal humour and carry out regular research on this sub-class of humour. In this effect, it would be great if the academic institutions and centres specialising in Linguistics and Communication centres offer courses on various aspects of humour and collaboratively shape the development of Humour Studies as a full-fledged academic discipline.

6.8. Summary

Humour represents a vast and distinct spectrum of phenomena that exist in assorted genres of human interactions. For convenience, humour performers and humour scholars have identified modality as a defining characteristic of the genre. Accordingly, categories such as verbal humour, visual humour, figural humour and aural humour have emerged. This thesis concentrated on the special genre of verbal humour.

The enterprise of verbal humour sustains itself on linguistic and cognitive aspects of social interactions. Partially lending and partially violating the norms verbal humour and its diverse sub-fields exhibit a kind of omnipresence, a sort of pervasiveness. A natural query concerning the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms of verbal humour is how and where these mechanisms interact. The present study demonstrated that the

Linguistic and Cognitive mechanisms are interdependent and interact at all levels. The phenomena of verbal humour display subtle interplay between the two mechanisms that have interdependent and complementary existence. Though quantitatively the cognitive mechanisms are fewer than the linguistic mechanisms, qualitatively both have equal value. Though the thesis presents the two chapters separately, the mechanisms operate together, and there is as such no conceptual basis to perceive them as distinct entities or operations.

A successful recipe for humour is available neither structurally, nor conceptually. The present study has demonstrated the working of certain aspects and highlighted the need to examine some other aspects. Still, a lot more remains. Notably, the findings of this research have emerged in certain specific conditions. It does not claim to have observed all the conditions. It is expected that the findings would be identical in future research if the conditions remain constant.

From the psycholinguistic viewpoint, the comprehension of all instances of verbal humour requires the ability to draw inferences. In humour interpretation, the ability to draw inferences does not refer to connecting between words and their senses. In the context of perceiving the humorous use of language, it is necessary for an individual to make logical judgements by exploiting the available inputs, evidence and prior experience. Therefore, inferencing of humorous instantiations necessitates an individual to shift from basic observations to the complex application of creative thinking and circumstantial evidence. Liu (2010: 92) treats inferencing as the most important connection between the instances of humour and meaning. It seems viable to conclude that various instances of verbal humour succeed not mainly due to the presence of polysemous and homophonous words in them. Rather, it is evident that in most cases it is the collocation of these words the presence, absence or manipulation of which renders them humorously ambiguous. Concerning interpretation of verbal humour, the ability to infer in the sense discussed above is a prerequisite that concerns the linguistic as well as cultural aspects.

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Appendices

- Appendix 1 Informed consent form
- Appendix 2a FIRO-B questionnaire
- Appendix 2b FIRO-B measurement scale
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Appendix 1

Informed Consent Form

Personal Details

Name of the participant (optional):

Age:

Gender:

Occupation:

Place of birth and stay:

Language(s) spoken at home:

Medium of instruction during formal education:

Knowledge of languages/ dialects other than Hindi-English:

Declaration

I,, am taking part in this experiment with my own willingness. The researcher, Mr. Tariq Khan, Centre for ALTS, University of Hyderabad has informed me that my participation in the experiments has academic objectives and my response would be computed along with that of others. I have no objection to it and I most willingly consent to record my response for this doctoral research on the Linguistic and Cognitive Mechanisms of Verbal Humour.

Date:

Signature

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 2a

Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation – Behaviour Questionnaire

Name:

Age:

Please be as honest as you can.

Please read the sentences given below and for each of them select the option that best applies to you. Choose from the following options:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1. Usually | 2. Often | 3. Sometimes |
| 4. Occasionally | 5. Rarely | 6. Never |

1	I try to be with people	
2	I let other people decide what to do	
3	I join social groups	
4	I try to have close relationships with people	
5	I tend to join social organizations when I have an opportunity	
6	I let other people strongly influence my actions	
7	I try to be included in informal social activities	
8	I try to have close, personal relationship with people	
9	I try to include other people in my plans	
10	I let other people control my actions	
11	I try to have people around me	
12	I try to get close and personal with people	
13	When people are doing things together, I tend to join them	
14	I am easily led by people	
15	I try to avoid being alone	
16	I try to participate in group activities	

Please read the sentences given below and for each of them select the option that best applies to you. Choose from the following options:

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. Most people | 2. Many people | 3. Some people |
| 4. A few people | 5. One or two people | 6. No body |

17	I try to be friendly with people	
18	I let other people decide what to do	
19	My personal relations with people are cool and distant	
20	I let other people take charge of things	
21	I try to have close relationships with people	
22	I let other people strongly influence my actions	
23	I try to get close and personal with people	
24	I let other people control my actions	
25	I act cool and distant with people	
26	I am easily led by people	
27	I try to have close, personal relationship with people	

Please read the sentences given below and for each of them select the option that best applies to you. Choose from the following options:

1. Most people 2. Many people 3. Some people
4. A few people 5. One or two people 6. No body

28	I like people to invite me to do things	
29	I like people to act close and personal with me	
30	I try to influence strongly actions of other people	
31	I like people to invite me to join in their activities	
32	I like people to act close towards me	
33	I try to take charge of things when I am with people	
34	I like people to include me in their activities	
35	I like people to act cool and distant towards me	
36	I try to have other people do things the way I want them done	
37	I like people to ask me to participate in their discussions	
38	I like people to act friendly towards me	
39	I like people to invite me participate in their activities	
40	I like people to act distant towards me	

Please read the sentences given below and for each of them select the option that best applies to you. Choose from the following options

1. Usually 2. Often 3. Sometimes
4. Occasionally 5. Rarely 6. Never

41	I try to be the dominant person when I am with people	
42	I like people to invite me to do things	
43	I like people to act close towards me	
44	I try to have other people do things I want done	
45	I like people to invite me to join in their activities	
46	I like people to act cool and distant towards me	
47	I try to influence strongly other people's actions	
48	I like people to include me in their activities	
49	I like people to act close and personal with me	
50	I try to take charge of things when I am with people	
51	I like people to invite me to participate in their activities	
52	I like people to act distant towards me	
53	I try to have other people do things the way I want them	
54	I take charge of things when I am with people	

Thank you for participating

	I	C	A	Total
E				
W				
Total				

Appendix 2b

Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation Behaviour FIRO-B – Measurement Scale

Numerals in the first row correspond to the question number in the questionnaire
 Numerals in the second row correspond to choice relevant for scoring
 Each match between question number and the choices is scored one point

Inclusion Expressed

1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	16
1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	1

Inclusion Wanted

28	31	34	37	39	42	45	48	51
1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	1	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2

Control Expressed

30	33	36	41	44	47	50	53	54
1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2

Control Wanted

2	6	10	14	18	20	22	24	26
1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3

Affection Expressed

4	8	12	17	19	21	23	25	27
1, 2	1, 2	1	1, 2	4, 5, 6	1, 2	1, 2	4, 5, 6	1, 2

Affection Wanted

29	32	35	38	40	43	46	49	52
1, 2	1, 2	5, 6	1, 2	5, 6	1	5, 6	1, 2	5, 6

The term 'total' here refers to the sum of points calculated either horizontally for inclusion, control and affection or vertically for the expressed and wanted behaviour.

Total expressed behaviour

1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	16
1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	1
30	33	36	41	44	47	50	53	54
1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2
4	8	12	17	19	21	23	25	27
1, 2	1, 2	1	1, 2	4, 5, 6	1, 2	1, 2	4, 5, 6	1, 2

Total wanted behaviour

28	31	34	37	39	42	45	48	51
1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	1	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2
2	6	10	14	18	20	22	24	26
1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
29	32	35	38	40	43	46	49	52
1, 2	1, 2	5, 6	1, 2	5, 6	1	5, 6	1, 2	5, 6

Total inclusion

1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	16
1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	1
28	31	34	37	39	42	45	48	51
1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	1	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2

Total control

30	33	36	41	44	47	50	53	54
1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2
2	6	10	14	18	20	22	24	26
1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3

Total affection

4	8	12	17	19	21	23	25	27
1, 2	1, 2	1	1, 2	4, 5, 6	1, 2	1, 2	4, 5, 6	1, 2
29	32	35	38	40	43	46	49	52
1, 2	1, 2	5, 6	1, 2	5, 6	1	5, 6	1, 2	5, 6

I (E)		C (E)		A (E)		Total	
I (W)		C (W)		A (W)		Total	
Total		Total		Total		Ratio	

Appendix 3a

Jokes and I Questionnaire

Personal information (optional)

Name:

Age:

Email:

Gender:

Start time:

End time:

Please try to be as honest as you can

For the statements given below, fill the boxes with numbers corresponding to the option that best applies to you.

1 = always

2 = often

3 = sometimes

4 = rarely

5 = never

6 = do not know

Sr.	Statements	
01	I like jokes of all kinds	
02	I do not mind jokes at any situation	
03	I like jokes that target me	
04	I laugh at jokes even if they insult me	
05	I laugh at jokes only if they target others	
06	I need help to understand the funniness in jokes	
07	I like to joke with people	
08	If I like a joke I retell it to my friends	
09	If somebody jokes, I definitely laugh	
10	I can joke with anyone including strangers	
11	I avoid laughing if there are many people around	
12	I like to entertain people with jokes	
13	I enjoy being laughed at	
14	I like to spend time without laughing	
15	I enjoy laughing at others	
16	I allow people to joke with me	
17	I like jokes that I can reuse	
18	I can understand cartoons without help	
19	I like jokes in conversation	
20	I can recall jokes from various situations of life	
21	If somebody jokes with me, I hit back with jokes	
22	I carefully choose the joke I want to tell anyone	
23	I like jokes about professionals	
24	I can understand jokes without help	

Please try to be as honest as you can

For the statements given below, fill the boxes with numbers corresponding to the option that best applies to you.

1 = strongly agree

2 = agree

3 = disagree

4 = strongly disagree

5 = cannot say

Sr.	Statements	
25	Jokes are necessary for life	
26	Jokes are good for physical & mental health	
27	Jokes should become part of curriculum	
28	Jokers should get permanent employment	
29	Jokes are needed even at work places	
30	Jokes do not insult anyone	
31	Jokes represent the misuse of language	
32	Joking can improve communication skills	
33	Joking is the best way to cheer one's mood	
34	Joking style reflects the personality type	
35	Jokes should be in words only, not in behaviour	
36	A good joke can make an upset person happy	
37	Jokes should be censored for appropriateness	
38	Joking is a waste of time	
39	Jokes can help build lasting relations	
40	Jokes unnecessarily require additional thinking	
41	Comic cartoons are funnier than comic jokes	
42	Comic videos are funnier than comic jokes	
43	Repeated use decreases the funniness of jokes	
44	Jokes showing stupidity / ignorance are funny	
45	Jokes showing accident / misfortune are funny	
46	Jokes that target politicians are funny	
47	Jokes that target teachers are funny	
48	Jokes that target religious leaders are funny	

Declaration

I permit the researcher to use my response to the above statements for use in all academic purposes.

Date:

Signature

Thank you for your valuable time.

Appendix 3b

Jokes and I Measurement Scale												
Sr.	1	2	3	4	5	6	Sr.	1	2	3	4	5
01	4	3	2	1	0	0	25	4	3	2	1	0
02	4	3	2	1	0	0	26	4	3	2	1	0
03	4	3	2	1	0	0	27	4	3	2	1	0
04	4	3	2	1	0	0	28	4	3	2	1	0
05	2	2	1	1	0	0	29	4	3	2	1	0
06	0	1	2	3	4	0	30	1	2	3	4	0
07	4	3	2	1	0	0	31	1	2	3	4	0
08	4	3	2	1	0	0	32	4	3	2	1	0
09	4	3	2	1	0	0	33	4	3	2	1	0
10	4	3	2	1	0	0	34	4	3	2	1	0
11	0	1	2	3	4	0	35	1	2	3	4	0
12	4	3	2	1	0	0	36	4	3	2	1	0
13	4	3	2	1	0	0	37	1	2	3	4	0
14	0	1	2	3	4	0	38	0	0	2	4	0
15	2	2	1	1	0	0	39	4	3	2	1	0
16	4	3	2	1	0	0	40	0	0	2	4	0
17	4	3	2	1	0	0	41	1	2	3	4	0
18	4	3	2	1	0	0	42	1	2	3	4	0
19	4	3	2	1	0	0	43	4	3	2	1	0
20	4	3	2	1	0	0	44	4	3	2	1	0
21	4	3	2	1	0	0	45	4	3	2	1	0
22	0	1	2	3	4	0	46	4	3	2	1	0
23	4	3	2	1	0	0	47	4	3	2	1	0
24	4	3	2	1	0	0	48	4	3	2	1	0
Six times or more use of option 6 means invalid response.							Six times or more use of option 5 means invalid response.					

To arrive at the score obtained by a test taker sum up the score obtained by him/her against individual items. Then, divide the sum by two. The resultant score ranges between 0 and 94. The score thus obtained may have the following interpretations:

81 and above	61-80	41-60	21 and 40	20 and below
Highly inclined	Inclined	Neutral	Uninclined	Antagonistic

Following are the implications:

Super inclined	Naturally, intuitively and openly responds to all kinds of joke
	Shows self-dependence in use of all kinds of joke
Inclined	Likes jokes and has positive attitude towards them
	Can have jokes to use in various situations
Sub-inclined	Can understand jokes but likes other genre above jokes.
	Can initiate jokes and joking behaviour but with some reservations
Uninclined	Prefers other genres over jokes and shows lack of self-dependence
	May not appreciate all kinds of jokes
Antagonistic	Feels uncomfortable and shows indifferent response to jokes
	Shows inhibition and has negative attitude towards jokes

Appendix 4

English-Hindi Bilinguals' Self-Assessment Questionnaire

For the following statements, answer as applicable to you.

Please write 1 for Yes, 2 for No and 3 for may be

1. I know written English and Hindi well enough to be able to spot mistakes and misprints in a text. []
2. I can read an editorial in English or Hindi and determine the areas of agreement and disagreement between the author's views and mine. []
3. When I read a short report on an accident written in English and Hindi, I can tell how many persons were injured and what their condition is. []
4. If I have to fill out a detailed application form in English or Hindi, I understand most of the information required. []
5. I understand what is written on a poster in English and Hindi. []
6. When I see something being offered for sale in English or Hindi or English-Hindi mixed code, I can give a description of the product, when and where it is being sold and how much it costs. []
7. I can understand monolingual traffic signs, billboards, sign posts in English and Hindi as well as English-Hindi mixed code. []
8. If a menu is written in English or Hindi or English-Hindi mixed code, I can place my order knowing what I will be eating. []
9. If I'm on phone and the caller speaks English or Hindi or English-Hindi mixed code, I can understand what the person wants. []
10. If a public announcement is made in English or Hindi or English-Hindi mixed code, I understand the topic, contents and details. []
11. In the usual exchange of greetings between two people, I understand everything spoken to me in English and Hindi. []
12. In radio, television, newspaper or internet advertisements given in English or Hindi or English-Hindi mixed codes, I can understand the main details (like who is selling what, where, when, and at what price). []
13. I can follow a conversation taking place in English or Hindi or English-Hindi mixed codes. []
14. When I watch a movie in English or Hindi, I can easily follow the dialogues and recognize the role of each character. []
15. If somebody, who knows only English or Hindi, wants to reach some place I know, I can easily direct him/ her how to go there. []

Appendix – 5a

Items to test the processing of self-directed verbal humour

Please read the following jokes and rate them on funniness. Kindly use the following numerals for rating:

1 = Very funny

2 = Funny

3 = Little funny

4 = Not funny

5 = Cannot say

Sl.	Jokes	Ratings
1	“You must bring change” great line said by, guess? A bus conductor!	
2	Software techie; I cannot print. Every time I try it says “cannot find printer.” I even lifted it and kept it in front of the monitor.	
3	Why do couples hold hands during their wedding? It is a formality just like two boxers shaking hands before the fight begins!	
4	A girl phoned me the other day and said, "Come on over; nobody is home." I went over. There was nobody home.	
5	Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.	
6	I remember the time that I was kidnapped and they sent a piece of my finger to my father. He said he wanted more proof.	
7	In childhood, I worked in a pet shop. I was so ugly that people kept asking me how big I would get.	
8	Someone misses you, needs you, worries about you, feels lonely without you. Guess who? Obviously! The monkey in the zoo.	
9	I like your smile Because my favourite colour is "YELLOW"	
10	Three simple ways to break a mirror (a) Throw stone at the mirror. (b) Throw the mirror on the floor and (c) Stand in front of the mirror and smile by showing your teeth	
11	Difference between ignorance and self-control When you see mirror and do not laugh at yourself, it is called ignorance! But, when your friends look at you and do not laugh, it is called self-control	
12	Girl: Am I pretty or ugly? Boy: You are both. I mean you are pretty ugly	
13	God thought that since he could not be everywhere he made a mother. Then devil thought that he could not be everywhere he made a mother-in-law.	

14	One day "see" saw sea & "saw" did not see sea. "See" saw sea and jumped in sea. "Saw" did not see sea but jumped in sea. "See" saw "saw" in sea & "saw" saw "see" in sea. "See" "saw" both saw sea & both "saw" & "see" were happy to see Sea. That is how to exercise your brain..!	
15	Teacher: Name the person who keeps on talking when people are not interested? Student: Teacher	
16	When the Ladies hostel caught Fire, it took one hour to bring the Fire under control. And, it took another three hours to bring the firemen under control.	
17	What happens when a lion roars thrice? Think, any guess? "Tom & jerry cartoon begins"	
18	Student: I was stuck in ELEVATOR for three hours due to electric failure Teacher: I once was got stuck on ESCALATOR for three hours	
19	When I open my eyes every morning I pray to God that everyone should have a friend like you. Why should only I suffer!	
20	Husband: Will you marry, after I die? Wife: No, I will live with my sister. Wife: Will you marry, after I die? Husband: No, I will also live with your sister.	
21	I used to be indecisive. Now? I am not sure.	
22	I know you like work. It fascinates you. That is why you sit and look at it for hours.	
23	If you keep your feet firmly on the ground, You will have trouble putting on your pants.	
24	If everything seems to be coming your way, You are probably in the wrong lane.	

Appendix – 5b

Items to test the processing of Normative, Dynamic and Jokes

Task - 1

Please read the following jokes and rate them according to the following scale:

1 = Funny and laughable 2 = Funny but not laughable
3 = Not funny but laughable 4 = Neither funny nor laughable 5 = Cannot say

Sl.	Jokes	Rating
1	Boss: The driver's post is yours with a starting salary of Rs. 2000/- month. Employee: Starting salary is fine but how much is the driving salary?	
2	Software techie; I cannot print. Every time I try it says "cannot find printer." I even lifted it and kept it in front of the monitor.	
3	Sardar to his servant: Go and water the plants Servant: It's already raining. Sardar: So what take an umbrella and go.	
4	Leave application by a Sardar Dear Sir, my wife is ill. There is no other husband to take care of her. So please declare it a holiday.	
5	Doctor: Your Kidneys have failed Patient: 'By how many marks sir?'	
6	Biology teacher told his students: There are 8 sexually transmitted diseases. You will get at least one in the practical exam.	
7	Students talking after the English test. The exam was good but I could not answer the last question. They asked the past tense of THINK I thought and thought but could not recall. Finally I wrote think.	
8	Girl to his boyfriend: Write me a letter that I keep reading all my life. Boy: Here it goes: (!=0!>) X#!'Y <??0!> ?!X'Y'@#P> {xyp<tls% } = e'x!0	
9	Teacher: "Use the word 'I' in a sentence." Tommy: "I is.." Teacher: "No, Tommy, you must say 'I am'." Tommy: "Alright. I am the ninth letter of the alphabet."	
10	Boss: "Why aren't you working?" Worker: "I didn't see you coming."	
11	Sardar to his servant: Go and water the plants Servant: It's already raining. Sardar: So what take an umbrella and go.	
12	Teacher to student: Say the three words that occur most frequently Student: I dont know Teacher: Very good!	

13	Psychiatrist's secretary: "There's a man in the waiting room who claims to be invisible." Psychiatrist: "Tell him I can't see him right now."	
14	I got pulled over for speeding. The cop says, "Do you know the speed limit is 55 miles per hour?" I said, "Yes, officer, but I wasn't going to be driving that long."	
15	A husband and wife were sitting at a bar when a drunk next to them passed gas. The husband exclaimed, "How dare you fart before my wife!" The drunk replied, "I'm sorry, I didn't know it was her turn!"	
16	Question : What do u call a fish wid no eye? Answer: fsh!	
17	I have a new job. And, I also have about 500 men under me. My job is to cut grass in the cemetery.	
18	Bachelors think that married men are lucky Married men think that bachelors are lucky Why do they think so differently? Bachelors think at night while the Married men think during the day.	
19	Question: There is always a sign board "Drive Slow" near schools but never near girls hostel. Why? Answer: Vehicles automatically slow down at girls hostels. No need for a sign board.	
20	Argument between a British and an Indian British: We spoiled your motherland for 200 years Indian: we are spoiling your mother tongue every day.	
21	Hema: Wish you happy and safe journey! Take care. Nita: As if we won't without her wishes.	
22	Sonu: Do well in exams. Wish you all the best. Monu: How will anyone do well when the preparation is zero?	
23	Lila: Hello Sheela how are you? Sheela: Don't you have your own senses? Why do you need me answer this?	
24	Ravi: See you again! Ramu: Is it necessary?	
25	Husband: I thought you would cook me kheer today. Wife: You thought with what?	

Task - 2

Select any five items that would you like to reuse from the above table and put their serial numbers in the following boxes:

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Appendix – 5c

Items to test the processing of funny one-liners and fake headlines

Condition i

Read the one-liners given below and rate them according to their funniness. Kindly use the following numerals to rate them:

1 = Very funny

2 = Funny

3 = Little funny

4 = Not funny

5 = Cannot say

Sl.	One-liners	Ratings
1	I do not suffer from insanity, I enjoy every minute of it.	
2	On the other hand, you have different fingers.	
3	Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until they speak.	
4	It takes patience to listen, but it takes skill and practice to pretend that you are listening.	
5	Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit; Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.	
6	A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a workstation.	
7	If you think nobody cares if you are alive; try missing a couple of payments.	
8	If God is watching us all the time, we must be performing well.	
9	To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.	
10	Some people cause happiness wherever they go. Others cause happiness whenever they go.	
11	A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.	
12	Laugh at your problems; Everybody else does.	
13	Once I thought I was wrong; But that was my mistake.	
14	Everybody wants to go to heaven; But nobody wants to die.	
15	God must love stupid people. He made so many of them.	
16	If winning is not everything, why do they keep score?	
17	It's not the fall that kills you; it's the sudden stop at the end.	

18	Money can't buy happiness; But it sure makes misery easier to live with.	
19	We are part of the ultimate statistics, Ten out of ten die.	
20	Worrying works! 90% of the things people worry about never happen.	

Condition ii

Read the fake headlines given below and rate them for funniness. Kindly use the following numerals to rate them:

1 = Very funny

2 = Funny

3 = Little funny

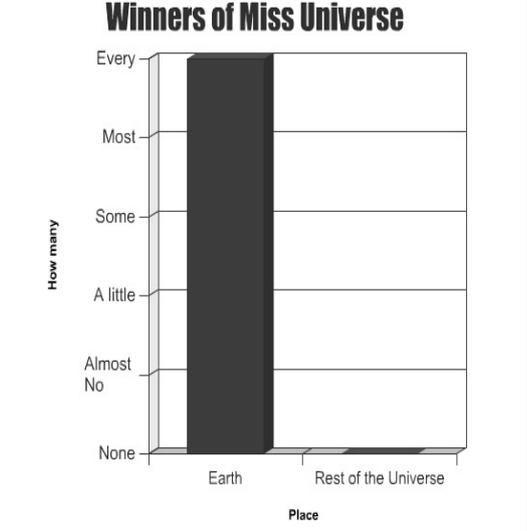
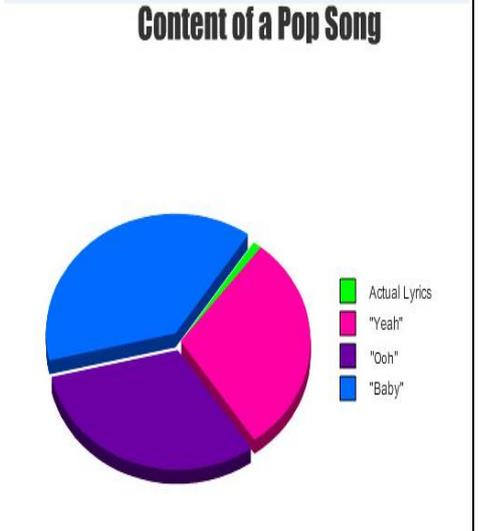
4 = Not funny

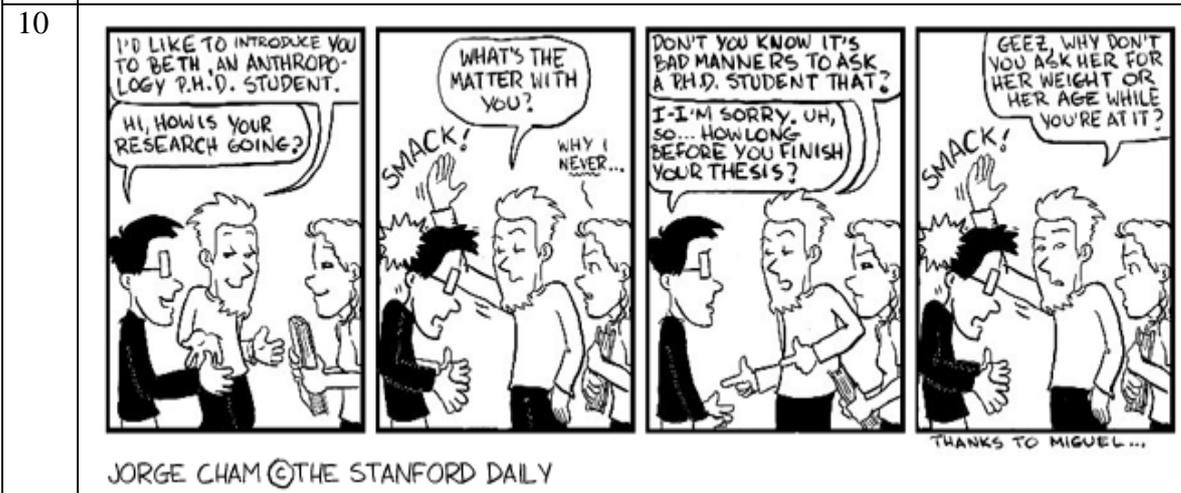
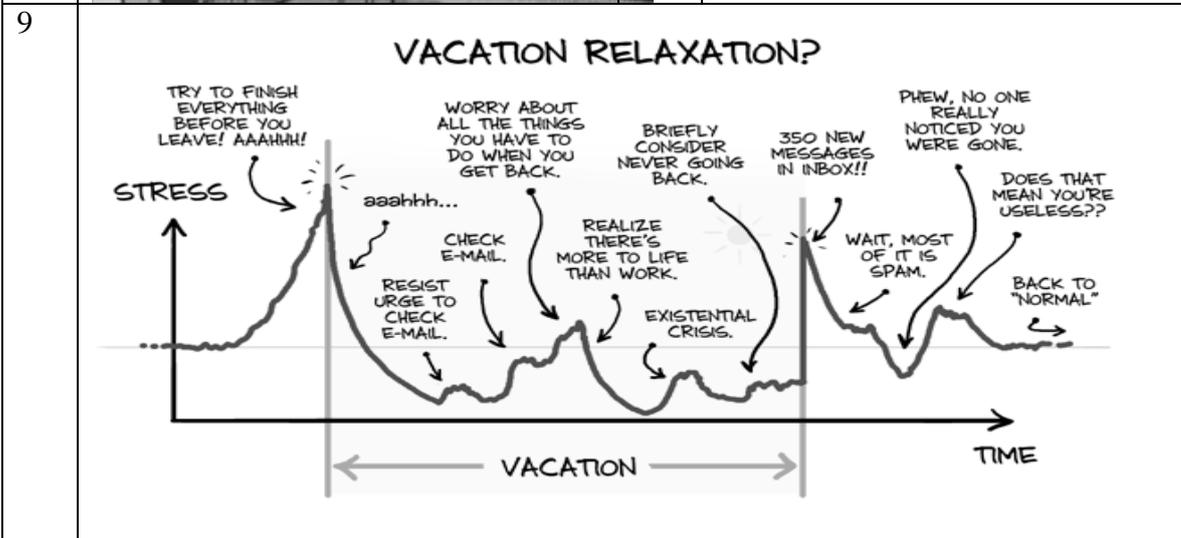
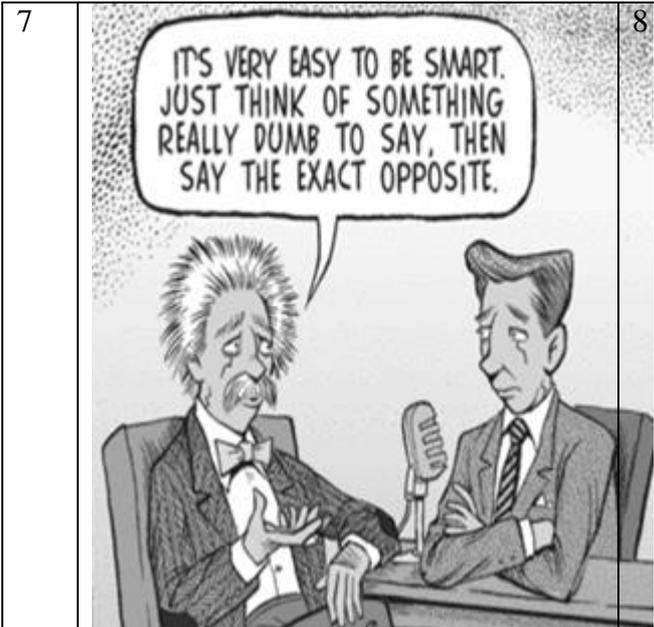
5 = Cannot say

Sl.	Fake headlines	Ratings
1	Chiranjeevi gets 'Best Actor' award for his acting performance in Congress Party	
2	Hostel student exposed for studying secretly in toilet to avoid embarrassment of studying	
3	Domino's Pizza delivery boys allowed to jump signals to meet "30 minutes delivery" deadline	
4	Sonia Gandhi declares 'Secularism' as an asset while filing nomination	
5	Congress distributing special glasses that allows people see development work of Rahul Gandhi in Amethi	
6	Frustrated of being turned into poll agenda, Vadra chops off Antarctica from Earth to create his own planet	
7	Tourist suffers heart attack after seeing water park in Rajasthan	
8	After constantly losing "National Spelling Bee" to Indian origin kids, US looking for a new national language	
9	Doctor with clear and readable handwriting found fraud	
10	IIT Delhi develops "Famometer" to measure amount of defamation	
11	Six IT employees arrested for discussing things other than politics	
12	Passersby leave a man dying on Delhi road assuming it as a "social experiment"	
13	First batch of containers leave for Switzerland to fetch black money	
14	Government to pay Google \$20 billion for acquiring IRCTC	
15	IIT student concentrating hard on research in physics to finally get a banking job	
16	Lazy corrupt man still to remove his black money from Swiss bank	
17	FIFA World Cup teams send SOS to Dhoni to score last minute goals	
18	Man, who laughed loudly after typing LOL, gets award for honesty	
19	Man trying hard to remain in hospital for 48 hours to claim Mediclaim Policy	
20	Facebook to create a separate wall at each historical monument for Indians to write whatever they want	

Appendix – 5d

Items to test the processing of verbal-visual instances of humour

Sl.	Visual-verbal stimuli	Sl.	Visual-verbal stimuli
1		2	
3		4	
5	<p style="text-align: center;">Winners of Miss Universe</p> 	6	<p style="text-align: center;">Content of a Pop Song</p> 



Appendix – 5e

Items to test the processing of ambiguous puns and GP

Please read the following jokes and rate them according to the scale given below:

1 = Very funny

2 = Funny

3 = Little funny

4 = Not funny

5 = Cannot say

Sr.	Jokes	Ratings
1	Do not talk to me ever again. You go your way and I will go my way. Let us never meet again. X axis said it to Y axis.	
2	Should women have children after thirty-five? No! Thirty-five children are more than enough.	
3	Take out all the clothes at night. Because, there is no certainty of rain.	
4	Do you know what the best SMS of the year 1947 was? There were no mobile phones then, so there was no SMS either.	
5	Why do we write etc. in some answers? It is an abbreviation, meaning End of Thinking Capacity	
6	What is the difference between an orange and an apple/ The colour of an orange is orange But the colour of an apple is never apple.	
7	Can a kangaroo jump higher than the Eiffel tower? Yes because Eiffel tower cannot jump.	
8	What are three most frequently used words in English? I don't know.	
9	What are three main types of students in a University? Those who make wonders happen, those who see wonder happen and those who wonder whatever happens.	
10	If one teacher cannot teach all the subjects Then, why do they expect one student to learn all of them	
11	God has given us Real Eyes to Realise the Real Lies.	
12	Do not drink and drive. You might hit a bump and spill your drink.	
13	He has got his looks from his mother. She is a plastic surgeon.	
14	I am in shape. Round is a shape, isn't it?	
15	When you think you have met the right partner what you fail to notice is s/he is going to be always right.	
16	It is not okay to keep tossing a book lightly. Throw it with great force.	
17	Should you stir your coffee with right hand or left hand? Neither, you should use a spoon.	
18	Do your friends know that you are mad?	
19	Teaching is as easy as walking in the park but why do people fear it? Because this park is Jurassic Park.	
20	What is an adult joke? A joke that is eighteen years old.	

Appendix 5f

Items to test the processing of code-mixed jokes

Sl.	Monolingual and code-mixed jokes	Ratings
1	Student: Can I go to the bathroom? Teacher: Correcting him, may I go to the bathroom. Student: But, I asked first.	
2	Teacher: Why are you late for the class? Students: It is because of the signboard on road. Teacher: What signboard did cause you delay? Student: Signboard that read, Go slow – school ahead.	
3	Doctor: You need stitches. Patient: <i>cost kyaa aayegaa?</i> (What will be the expense?) Doctor: Rs. 5000 Patient: <i>sirf stitches denaa, no embroidery please!</i> (Give only stitches, no embroidery please).	
4	A gang of robbers broke a bank. They could not find money but found chilled bottles of red wine. The next day newspaper headlines read; “Blood bank looted”	
5	Manu: <i>I'm going kaa matlab kyaa hotaa hai?</i> (What is the meaning of I am going in Hindi?) Ravi: <i>main jaa rahaa hoon</i> (I am going) Manu: <i>aise jaane nahi dungaa, pahle matlab bataao</i> (I will not let you go, first tell me the meaning)	
6	Three students were talking after the exam First student: I left the paper blank. Did not know any answer. Second student: <i>maine bhii puraa blank chhor diyaa.</i> (I too left it completely blank) Third student: <i>are nahi! teacher samjhegi hamne ek dusre se copy kiyaa.</i> (Oh no! The teacher will think we copied from each other)	
7	Teacher: Tell me a sentence that starts with I Student: I is the ... Teacher: Stop! Stop! Stop! <i>kabhii bhii I ke baad is mat lagaao. I ke baad hameshaa am lagtaa hai.</i> (Never use ‘is’ after I. You should always use ‘am’ after I.) Student: Okay, I am the ninth letter of English alphabet.	
8	Girl: <i>Is dress ki kimat kyaa hai?</i> (What is the price for this dress?) Saleboy: Rs. 5000/- (Rs. 5000/-) Girl: <i>uff! aur us pink waalii kii?</i> (Uff! And that pink one?) Sales boy: <i>uff + uff</i> (Uff + Uff)	
9	A couple started romancing in a running auto. The auto rickshaw driver started looking at them. The auto collided with an electric pole. He finally understood why Titanic sank.	

10	<p>Angry boss: <i>tumne kabhii ullu dekhaa hai.</i> (Have you ever seen an owl?)</p> <p>Employee: <i>sar jhukaa ke kharaa rahtaa hai</i> (Head down, says nothing)</p> <p>Boss: <i>niche kyaa dekh rahe ho?</i> (Why are looking down?) <i>idhar dekho</i> (Look here, at me)</p>	
11	<p>Wife: <i>lo light chali gayi</i> (Oh! Light went off)</p> <p>Husband: <i>light chali gayee toh kyaa, fan chala do</i> (So what? Switch on the fan)</p> <p>Wife: <i>agar fan chaalu kiyaa toh candle bhuj jayegi</i> (If I switch on the fan, the candle will blow off).</p>	
12	<p>An intelligent boy failed in English. His translation from Hindi to English is as under:</p> <p><i>main aam aadmi nahi hun</i> (I am not a mango man)</p> <p><i>mujhe bhi english aati hai</i> (English comes to me too)</p> <p><i>do aur do char</i> (Give and give four)</p> <p><i>main haripur hazaaraa se hun</i> (I am from greenpur thousanda)</p>	

Appendix – 5g

Items to test the processing of metalinguistic verbal humour

Item for training the participants

Three guys What When and Why were talking
 What: Why what are you doing?
 Why: I don't know what I am doing
 What: Why?
 Why: Why are you calling me?
 What: I did not call you.
 Why: What?
 What: Now why are you calling me?
 Why: When did I call you?
 When: Why are you guys bringing me in your arguments?
 Why: What? When?

Items for the main experiment

Sl.	Metalinguistic sources of humour	Ratings
1	I want to be like a schwa. It is never stressed.	
2	The best thing about the definite article is that it is the	
3	A good thing about indefinite articles is that they are a	
4	If you cannot change your lover, change the lover	
5	Why are there 5 syllables in the word "monosyllabic"?	
6	Its important to use apostrophe's right.	
7	Check to see if you any words out.	
8	Don't abbrev.	
9	Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.	
10	Don't use a run-on sentence you got to punctuate it.	
11	Each pronoun agrees with their antecedent.	
12	Just between you and I, case is important.	
13	Watch out for irregular verbs which has cropped up into our language.	
14	We should always use comma before and after however.	
15	And don't use conjunctions to start sentences.	

Appendix 5h

Items to test the processing of hilarious quotes and definitions

Sl.	Hilarious questions	Ratings
1	Why do we put suits in a Garment Bag, and put Garments in a Suitcase?	
2	Do tea employees take coffee breaks?	
3	How do you tell when you run out of invisible ink?	
4	If vegetarians eat vegetables, what do humanitarians eat?	
5	Why do you need a driver's license to buy liquor when you can't drink and drive?	
6	If God didn't want us to eat people, why did he make them out of MEAT?	

Sl.	Mysterious quotes	Ratings
1	I intend to live forever, or die trying.	
2	Join the Army, meet interesting people, kill them.	
3	It Could Be that the Purpose of Your Life is Only to Serve as a Warning to Others.	
4	I once thought that I had made a mistake, but I was mistaken.	
5	To save money on electricity, we've turned off the light at the end of the tunnel.	
6	Things equal to nothing else are equal to each other.	

Sl.	Deft definitions	Ratings
1	Divorce: Future tense of marriage.	
2	Cigarette: A pinch of tobacco rolled in paper with fire at one end and a fool on the other.	
3	Lecture: An art of transferring information from the notes of the lecturer to the notes of the students without passing through the minds of either.	
4	Dictionary: A place where success comes before work.	
5	Atom Bomb: An invention to end all inventions.	
6	etc: A sign to make others believe that you know more than you actually do.	
7	Tears: The hydraulic force by which masculine will-power is defeated by feminine water power.	
8	Miser: A person who lives poor so that he can die rich.	
9	Politician: One who shakes your hand before elections and your confidence after winning the election.	
10	Boss: Someone who is early when you are late and late when you are early.	

Accessed online from www.witty-quotes.com on 21 June 2015

Appendix – 5i

Items to test the processing of incomplete instances of verbal humour

Read the following sentences and fill up the blanks using suitable words.

Sl.	Jokes with gaps	Ratings
1	Child one: My father is a bus driver. He drives a bus. Child two: My papa is weightlifter. He lifts weight. Child three: Friends, does a lift shops?	
2	Child: I do not like my friends. Yesterday they dust on my face. Father: That is bad. But what did you do, then? Child: I sneezed.	
3	Father: Johnny why are you in the sun? Johnny: I am drying my sweat, papa.	
4	Patient: Doctor I feel very nervous. This is the first time that I am having an operation. Doctor: Worry not, I feel the same. This is the first time that I am	
5	Jerry: Have you ever swum in hot sun? Mac: Are you stupid? I swim only in	
6	Sales boy: Madam, this is a very nice dress. It is made of wool and it will keep you warm. Woman: Can I wear it in rain? Sales boy: Of course madam! You never see a sheep with an	
7	Baby cobra: Mom, are we poisonous? Mother cobra: Of course, you do not need to ask this. Baby cobra: I just bit my tongue and nothing	
8	Teacher: Children do you know when Columbus found America? Children: He must have found only after was lost.	
9	Your dog chased a man on a bicycle. Impossible! My dog cannot a bicycle.	
10	How old is your grandmother? By the time we complete lighting up the candle on her cake the first is all over.	
11	A person noticed a fellow passenger that he was wearing glove only in one hand. He inquired did you lose one of your gloves. The person replied “No I one.”	
12	A drunken man who was having meal in a restaurant feels something awkward with his meat. He calls the waiter and asks why the meat is so hard. The waiter replies “sir you are trying to eat the not the meat.	

Adapted from Woolard (1999)

Appendix– 5j

Items to test the processing of oxymorons and joke-cycles

Ranking task

Please read the texts in the following sets and rank them according to the descending order of funniness. Kindly use the following abbreviations for ranking the texts in each set:

MF = Most funny

AF = Average funny

LF = Least funny

I can resist everything except temptation.	AF
Alok Nath wants Facebook to add 'aashirwaad' button.	LF
Always be sincere, even when you don't mean it.	MF

Example set

I wasn't lying, I was just writing fiction with my mouth.	
The best cure for insomnia is to get a lot of sleep.	
Alok Nath is so sanskari that he smokes agarbattis.	

Set –1

I hate people but I love gatherings.	
Alok Nath has never received salary, he always receives pension.	
It takes two to lie; One to lie and the other to listen.	

Set – 2

Alok Nath eats Prasad as starters.	
We are born naked, wet and hungry. Then things get worse.	
I have a terrible memory; I never forget a thing.	

Set – 3

If you want to upgrade your weekend: Take Monday off.	
We must believe in free will. We have no choice.	
Alok Nath carried Hanuman Chalisa to school instead of notebooks.	

Set – 4

Live within your income, even if you have to borrow to do so.	
Finally, Sonia Gandhi found a bride for her son. Name; Alia Bhatt.	
There is no "me" in team. No, wait, yes there is!	

Set – 5

Somebody who can stop 100s of car with one hand is traffic police.	
It takes patience to listen. It takes skill to pretend you are listening.	
I can believe anything, provided it is quite incredible.	

Set – 6

God never said most of the things He said.	
Oh! So sorry! Did you mistake me for someone who cares?	
If you smile when things go wrong, you want to blame someone else.	

Set – 7

It usually takes 2-3 weeks to prepare a spontaneous speech.	
Oh, I didn't tell you? Then, it must be none of your business.	
Men are like TV Commercials. You cannot believe a word they say.	

Set – 8

I am a deeply superficial person.	
Try a little kindness; as little as possible.	
Love may be blind but marriage is a real eye-opener.	

Set – 9

Please do not eat me. I have a wife and kids; eat them!	
One good turn gets most of the blankets.	
I used to diet on any kind of food I could lay my hands on.	

Set – 10

A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.	
The budget was unlimited, but I exceeded it.	
Do infants have as much fun in infancy as adults do in adultery?	

Set – 11

I distinctly remember forgetting that.	
No one is listening until you make a mistake.	
You will never hear about farmers who are outstanding in their field.	

Set – 12

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Optimizing Humor in Language Classrooms

Tariq Khan

Abstract

Development of efficient language classrooms has been the concern all over the world for ages. An efficient language classrooms may be characterized by virtues such as; how interesting and relevant the lessons are, how easy and quick is the acquisition, its integration with other knowledge systems, timely recall, judicious use of the same and creative modifications in the skills acquired. The objective of this paper is to vindicate classroom humor as an instructional strategy. It advocates an objective and optimum use of humor so as to create inviting language classrooms and integrate learning with fun. Humor in pedagogy, in general and language pedagogy in particular, as principle as well as practice, has been there for ages. Philosophers, scholars, religious or political leaders and teachers have attempted to exploit the riches of humor for pedagogical outcomes. Still the discrepancy between the input and intake prevails. There have been vigorous attempts, in past as well as in recent times, to evolve or adopt mechanisms which can enhance the efficiency. This paper seeks to present 'humor' as a tool to reduce the discrepancy between input and intake. Such use of humor in language classrooms has behavioral as well intellectual aspects. Besides discussing these aspects, this paper contemplates on how to mold these possibilities into deliberate positive outcomes.

Introduction and content map

Increasing efficiency in pedagogy in general and language pedagogy in particular has always engaged the thought and concern from the scholars as well as academicians. Let's begin with two introspective questions that the language instructors are generally faced with "Do we teach in an interesting manner?" Putting the same in different words, the whole teaching community is faced with the question "Do language learners enjoy what we teach?" The answer to this question may

lie anywhere between the extremities of YES and NO. Whereas, on part of the learners a universal realization is that "Lessons that are enjoyed are learned better." That is to assert that when the lessons are interesting learning is fun-filled, quicker than usual and long lasting.

The basic assumption of this paper is that humor decreases the cognitive load during learning, supports the associative memory, positively affects the self-esteem of the learners and ensures attentiveness from them. However, the use humor in classrooms can have a negative side too. Thus, an optimal use of humor through proper quantification and appropriate implementation is expected to increase the efficiency of language classrooms. How this is realized will depend on how the various forms of humor are exploited. Traditionally, humor has been divided into four categories: *Figural*, *Verbal*, *Visual*, and *Auditory*. The humor to be used in the classroom situation may belong to any of these categories or may even emanate from a careful blending of the categories. The availability of computers and multi-media has made this sort of cross-fertilization easy to administer and maintain.

Justifying humor in language classrooms

Humor in classroom is somewhat a debated issue. The arguments regarding the use of humor in classrooms are based on the possible outcomes of this amalgamation. However, numerous research initiatives have confirmed the facilitative role humor plays in learning situations (Bruner, 2002; Askildson, 2005; Morrison, 2008 & Garner, 2005). It can be said that a great majority of the scholarship participating in this debate believes that the use of humor as a resource for educational objectives will have positive outcomes. Still, humor remains an under-explored and much under-utilized resource for teachers and trainers. Humor is an overlooked natural resource that can play a crucial role in creating a healthy learning environment, but there is very little written about using humor to meet the escalating challenges that confront educators (Morrison, 2008). The most significant aspect of engaging humor for pedagogy is the prospective creative output. Humor and creativity are great

companions, each a perfect complement for the other in nourishing thinking. Risk taking is the nucleus of creativity and of humor; the freedom to express wild ideas activates spirited conversation and sparks the imagination. The creative process flourishes when accompanied by a sense of humor (Morrison, 2008). Not only that, the use of humor in educational settings is promising in the form of various unintended benefits like decrease in stress level and emotional well-being. The use of humor as a pedagogical tool has been shown to reduce classroom anxiety, create a more positive atmosphere, as well as facilitate the learning process (Garner, 2005).

Humor is a cooperative activity which requires wider and varied participation from the surrounding. It has to do with the rapport between the teachers and students and also among the students themselves. If exercised judiciously, humor can be a tool to ensure greater cooperation among the people involved in the teaching-learning process. Humor can be nurtured and integrated into the classroom such that it fosters a sense of openness and respect between students and teachers. When students feel safe, they can enjoy the learning process and each other. The thoughtful use of humor by instructors can contribute to teaching effectiveness (Kher et al., 1999).

Besides fun and amusement, the use of humor involves a creative blend of (im)possible contexts. This, taken as a mental exercise, can prepare the learners to face unfamiliar situations of academics as well as life with an increased degree of boldness. Tamblyn (2003) regards humor and creativity as one and the same. He advocates that the case for using humor in teaching has greater implications, say in life itself. According to Tamblyn in this random experiment called Life, we are frequently required to make decisions with insufficient data, get the job done with inadequate tools and accept less than 100 percent success. Humor through creative playfulness prepares you for uncertainty. Here, in this paper the author intends to voice for the incorporation of humor for pedagogical gains in general and language learning in particular. Banas et al. (2011) presents a report on four decades of research on humor in educational settings. They report that the use of positive, non-aggressive

humor has been associated with a more interesting and relaxed learning environment, higher instructor evaluations, greater perceived motivation to learn and enjoyment of the course. They also report that the use of negative or aggressive humor aimed at students has been associated with many of the opposite outcomes, anxious and uncomfortable learning environment, lower evaluation of instructors, increased student distraction and less enjoyment of class. The researchers in humor as well as pedagogy have both emphasized on the need for an enhanced level of theoretical engagements with humor and its effects on creative thinking, learning, memory etc.

Humor in language classrooms – the affective aspects

The behavioral aspect of humor is a much debated phenomena. Educators seem to have both faith as well as fear in involving humor in the classrooms. The fear they express ranges from change in the classroom environment, lack of seriousness, rise of indiscipline, distraction and subsequent loss of concentration. This in turn has made the use of humor in educational settings is low by any standards.

The reasons behind the abysmal avoidance of humor for pedagogical purposes are many. Teachers and trainers resist using humor because they fear the possible negative repercussions. May be they will bomb. May be they will inadvertently make an inappropriate joke. May be their topic is too serious for humor. May be humorous, playful audience will be too hard to control (Tamblyn, 2003). However, if executed optimally, the affective aspects of humor use in the classrooms are greatly positive. It helps in the development of a fine rapport between the instructors and the learners. Having achieved this, the instructor can accelerate the pace of teaching and learning and thereby increase the efficiency of classroom.

Humor in language classrooms – the cognitive aspects

Humor increases the potential for divergent thinking and the ability to solve complex problems. By linking previously unconnected areas of the brain, humor forges new associations involving existing concepts (Morrison, 2008). In *Using Humor to Maximize Learning*, (2008) he treats humor as the tonic for tired educators. He also highlights six advantages of classroom humor: Contributes to Mind/Body Balance, Maximizes Brain Power, Enhances Creativity, Facilitates Communication, Supports the Change Process, and Creates an Optimal Environment for Teaching and Learning. There is plenty of intellectual activity taking place when a certain humor succeeds besides exhibiting an incongruity of frames or schema or meanings. Drawing from Khan (2010) the cognitive aspects of humor include the following:

1. The ability to think creative & abstract, flexibly & alternatively, and co-relate between real and possible worlds.
2. The ability to process literal as well as non- literal (especially metaphorical) meanings.
3. The ability to analyze how a certain event may relate to certain other events merely on the basis of similarity or differences between their attributes.
4. The ability to draw inferences, use entailment and presuppositions from given information.

Humor and the training of (meta)linguistic skills

There are numerous ways in which language teaching and language learning have been tried. As a result the repository of teaching and learning methods has also grown in number. However, the efficiency in this regard is still a matter of concern. Efficiency in language pedagogy is yet to escalate in the proportion the methods have increased. The teaching research, especially with reference to language pedagogy, has been plagued by the (un)necessary debates surrounding dichotomous use of terms like Competence versus Performance, Input versus Intake, Language Use versus Language Development and

Realization Strategy versus Proficiency. However, leaving these debates aside, if instances of verbal humor such as jokes, puns or riddles are analyzed one is sure to arrive at satisfactory conclusions; that they are speech acts complete in their own and that they require an understanding level higher than that of non-contextual/ rule-based expressions. Humor represents perhaps one of the most genuine and universal speech acts within human discourse (Askildson, 2005). Thus, it naturally qualifies as an element within the course content and instructional manuals for the development of language and communication skills.

A typical feature of verbal humor like jokes and puns is that it involves language manipulation in such a way that the contexts are multiplied in an unpredictable way. Thus a regular use of humor like creative language would ensure greater levels of meta-linguistic awareness. Humorous and playful use of rhyme, alliterations and assonance from the target language adds to an indirect acquisition and observance of phonological rules. Similarly, fun-filled activities involving oxymorons result in greater lexical and semantic awareness among the learners. Thus, humor can be used as a tool for developing skills like phonological games, word-sense disambiguation, sentential logic and the like. Gradually, when the learners are able to successfully cut jokes the instructors can conclude that the learners have acquired the pragmatic and cultural aspects of the language use. Humor can be used as a vital tool for engaging learners with contemporary issues. Besides, it can also be trained as the easiest way to package and recall various issues concerning socio-political life. Taking the issue of incorporation of humor in classrooms a step further, Berk (2000) examined the viability of using humor in tests and exams. The experimental findings conclude that humor can greatly reduce the anxiety and improve performance of the test takers.

What can be done? Recommended activities

The objective or proposal of this paper is not to advocate transformation of teachers into classroom clowns or classrooms into jokers' club. Rather the intent is to explore and exploit the magic of humor of assorted kinds to develop an inviting

educational setting and escalate the volume and pace of learning. The role of the educator is as significant as the syllabus designer or the material developers. Only when the students are perceived as creative learners and humor is employed as material as well as means, the language classrooms will wear an inviting outlook. In this regard the following activities are mere suggestive.

Fantasies and personification – Putting learners into imaginative frame of mind by asking them to respond to unforeseen but pleasant situations like fantasies is assumed to facilitate a rapport between the educators and learners and between the learners and the course contents. Propositions like 'If you were a ...' or 'What if all of a sudden ...' are somewhat proven techniques for developing creative thinking among the learners. Learners often enjoy seeing their subjects and conceptual terms lying therein, being treated as humans and animals.

Cooking and tuning – The instructors may employ techniques like Cooking and Dining with the difficult concepts with the objectivity of getting learners acquainted with them and have fun. The instructors may allow and participate with the learners in making songs for praising, cursing, mocking at seemingly difficult concepts using familiar tune.

Learning with recall/ reminder cards – Cards which have the content map of the lesson or figural summary of it have often proved to be of great advantage to the learners.

Crafting and Weaving stories – The instructors may create stories or plays and manipulate them in such a way that the concepts learned recently become the characters of the story or play. The learners may also be asked to replicate this as an exercise.

Retelling jokes and redrawing cartoons – The learners may be asked to observe and retell a joke with modified contexts. The instructors may also attempt at drawing cartoons and ask the learners to redraw them in such a way that the taught

concepts are presented in a humorous way. They may ask the Word plays, puns, stories, jokes and riddles all involve the creative use of language.

Restructuring and renaming – The various elements of a classroom like the display board, doors, windows, curtains, furniture, walls and ceilings can all be restructured and their appearance can be manipulated in such a way that they add fun to learning. Also, the various activities employed in language teaching and recall of concepts can be renamed in such a way that the learners don't fear them and enjoy participating in the same. For instance, '*Word War*' for word recall and '*Sentence Shooters*' for sentence construction. The activities like role play and caricature have also been found to create good opportunity for expression among the learners.

Humor has to be formed part of educational policy itself. The syllabus designing, material development, the teaching activities as well as evaluation need to create space for the creative blend of fun and learning. There cannot be a singular way of incorporating humor into the language classrooms. Thus, the above activities are non-exhaustive and are only suggestive. The success in this regard also depends on how they get implemented in real situation. In fact the education givers need to keep thinking about the right quantity of dose as well as the learning oriented form of humor.

Optimizing humor as an instructional strategy

Better said than done! The educators are faced with the real test when it comes to applying humor in classroom situation. Humor is not a pedagogical panacea, and the mere inclusion of humor will not assure that learning will occur. If humor is used too frequently or inappropriately, the students might perceive topics as trivial and the instructor as less-than-serious (Shatz & LoSchiavo, 2006). Morrison (2008) observes that "Humor is difficult: It is difficult to define and difficult to practice. It is especially difficult to integrate into most school cultures. The training of teachers in employing humor in the classroom is regrettably missing in the teacher training programs (Ziv, 1988).

Thus there is a need to understand what humor to employ, when and how frequently. Simple joke-telling does not possess the attributes that well planned and content specific humor adds to the learning environment. Humor is most effective when it is appropriate to the audience, targeted to the topic and placed in the context of the learning experience (Garner, 2005). Most researchers who advocate humor as a supportive tool in teaching also stress upon the appropriate timings and adequate dose of it. The appropriate use of humor is a powerful tool to build a sense of community, promote creativity and reduce conflict (Kher et al., 1999).

It is of utmost significance that the humor used in the classrooms doesn't compromise on the learners' self-respect, and feeling of hostility or discrimination. Thus, the materials or manner of humor should not arise a feeling of insult or ridicule among the two parties involved. Another factor dictating the selection of material is the target of humor. The target is often a victim because most humor is the result of ridiculing or attacking the target. The safest target is the instructor, because self-deprecating humor avoids offending or alienating others, and allows students to view the teacher as more human (Shatz & LoSchiave, 2006). Hellman (2007) identifies seven steps for an appropriate use of humor in classroom; be yourself, pick your spots, be politically correct, know your audience, use oxymoron, alliterations and acronyms, sometimes be quiet and acknowledge others' humor. Since these steps were recommended by Stuart Hellman, they are also called *Stu's Seven Simple Steps to Success*. Thus the judicious use of humor in educational settings ought to observe some dos and don'ts:

Be precise and comprehensible – The piece of humor should be perfect sized, neither too short nor too long. The language should be easily understandable or else simplified. Often a joke on the concept learned recently is enjoyed a lot by the learners because the learners can understand the funny aspects as well as the learning therein. If the humor employed is enjoyed by the teachers only or if the educator feels that the use of humor is only for the learners and s/he has no fun to experience from it, the objective is indeed dead. The use of humor in classroom

should cause fun to both the educators as well as learners.

Customize your humor – Use only related and relevant humor – There is NO humor which can fit in all contexts and style. An educator who uses humor successfully does a bit of pruning and manipulation here and there in order to make the humor suitable for the learners. The style and medium of delivery should also be carefully chosen one. This will enhance the receptivity of the learners as well as cause increase in their experience of funniness.

Avoid overdose – Care for quantity and timings – The humor use in classroom does not call for a fixed number of jokes or even a fixed time for it. If the use of humor is too frequent, the course would progress slowly and this in turn would negatively affect the learning. The concerned teacher should carefully place humor and frequent it as per the requirements. Ziv (1988) recommends it to be 3-4 instances per hour.

Avoid causing hostility – ethnic humor, sexually colored humor or derogatory remarks in the guise of humor or humor causing insult should be avoided for best academic results. The use of such kinds of humor might cause distaste and lack of interest in the subject and instructor. Thus, instances of such humor should best be carefully weeded out from the repository of humor to be used in classroom.

Rephrasing comments – The comments made by the instructors are important factors behind the loss and gain of motivation and the consequent creative experimentations. So the instructors need to be very careful while giving feedback and expressing (dis)pleasure over the quality of the work. Similarly, with respect to handling fear of failure and punishment, faith and reward are the best options.

Making Database(s) – Creation of a database of things that cause amusement, the experience of funniness, laughter and enjoyment among the language learners is vital for various reasons. One among them is planned replication of the humorous stimuli. Besides, the preference of humor enjoyed by

the learners gives ample clue about the personality traits they are forming. An acknowledgement of learners' contribution to humorous situations will help develop a good rapport between the course instructors and the learners and add to positive feelings among them.

Conclusion

Increase in efficiency has been a constant challenge faced by the language instructors. As an applicable solution to this issue, this paper has vindicated humor with a pedagogical outlook and pedagogy with a humorous outlook. In the preceding sections humor was justified as a valid tool for language pedagogy. Its various exploitable affective and cognitive aspects were examined. This paper emphasized that, in order to reduce the discrepancy between input and intake of learning, the language educators perceive pupils (especially children) as creative learners. For the same, various classroom activities and alternative styles of teaching have been suggested to be devised and presented in a judicious manner. So that, humor becomes the source, medium and goal of the language classrooms, efficiency is satisfactorily enhanced and the limits of teachability get positively altered.

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HUMOROUS HEADLINES OR FORCED REINTERPRETATIONS? SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE FAKING NEWS AND THE UNREAL TIMES

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Abstract: Humour, parody, satire and spoof are marvellous phenomena of language and the human mind. The ability to use them judiciously is a highly desirable milestone in a person's life. They are such ingredients of entertainment discourse that also serve as the vehicle for disseminating socio-political ideas. The extra-linguistic aspects apart, they are exemplary substances for research in Linguistics because they involve language manipulation & wordplay on the one hand and forced reinterpretation & reverse engineering on the other. Arguably, very little research has taken place with these perspectives.

The headlines constitute the most salient aspect of news items and have become a genre in its own. That is why the headlines have often attracted the focus in linguistic research particularly from the sub-fields like Discourse and Pragmatics. However, the headlines of counterfactual news items have never received the attention they deserve. This paper is a departure from the trend. It concentrates on the linguistic structures and cognitive aspects of the (humorous) headlines of The Faking News (hereafter TFN) and The Unreal Times (hereafter TUT), two online portals for humour, parody, satire and spoof. The language manipulations in their headlines include spelling alternations, word formations, polysemization and ambiguation through wordplay & flouting of the maxims of conversation. The interpretative strategies include plain statements with unexpected elaboration, exaggeration & overextension of proposals, counterfactual accounts of an event, repetition of the statements, straight questions & twisted answers and incongruous linking between true statements. Some of them are contextual, necessitating prior knowledge. While others simply fit into incidents across time and cultures. The former type is ephemeral and constitutes the 'second generation jokes' or 'para jokes' (see Attardo 2001:70) whereas the later type is 'conversational jokes' and constitute the 'canned jokes.' Consider the following TFN and TUT headlines as examples:

1. Indian teen bags "International Calligraphy Award" for writing in public toilets.
2. After constantly losing "National Spelling Bee" to Indian origin kids, US looking for a new national language.
3. UNESCO stops Google from shutting down Orkut, declares it a "heritage site."
4. With DU admissions delayed, boy puts his marks in bank to earn interest on it and qualify for cut-offs.

5. Making sex education part of school curriculum will make students lose interest in sex: Harsh Vardhan.
6. US to attack King's Landing to establish democracy after Tyrion tells them about oil beneath it.
7. Delhi University's FYUP deadlock resolved, students allowed to bunk 1 out of 4 years.
8. Government to pay Google \$20 billion for acquiring IRCTC.
9. BMC to dig potholes and fill water in them so that Mumbaikars do not miss the delayed monsoon.
10. First batch of containers leave for Switzerland to fetch black money.

(Source: The Faking News)

The above headlines have two sets of information, both exhibiting some kind of intertextuality. The first would be humourless without the second, while the second would fail to make sense without the first. One perspective on these posts including the headlines, the narrations and the commentaries is that they are instances of mass communication with the potential to inform and entertain the viewers. However, this paper goes beyond the basal description to uncover the attempts of 'coercive reinterpretations'. As the title suggests, it explores whether the concerned headlines simply humour the viewers or force reinterpretations of the events, linguistic or whatsoever.

At first, this paper discusses news headlines as mini texts and a genre that merits scholarly attention. Then it introduces the relatively new trend of counterfactual reporting as entertainment discourse, which evokes laughter and forces reinterpretation. Next, it presents the striking features of TFN and TUT with special reference to humorous elements in their headlines. These introductions follow the sampling and analysis of their headlines. This paper employs a simple 'sort and analyse method.' It searched into the archives of TFN and TUT to build a gigantic corpus of the headlines. Next, it categorized them according to their structural and contextual aspects. Finally, it analyses them by implementing a synthesis of approaches from humour studies and cognitive linguistics.

Keywords: Humour, Headlines, The Faking News, The Unreal Times, Counterfactual reporting, Language manipulations, Forced reinterpretation.

1. Introduction

News headlines represent a constrained medium, for they have to consider several factors such as

brevity, emphasis and longevity. The governing agencies expect them to contain all these special effects. Therefore, it is natural for them to deviate from the conventional

representation of language use. Fake headlines that have mostly existed on the virtual platforms experience constraints of a different kind. Though brevity and longevity are not strict criteria, they need to be smart and articulate. Nevertheless, these constraints contribute to the (fake) headlines' linguistic and cognitive marvels of a certain kind. This paper seeks to present the linguistic and cognitive aspects of the headlines in counterfactual news. This issue is inherently interdisciplinary and one of the challenges associated with it is that of association. Where does it fit? Since it involves manipulative 'creative' use of language and context, it looks natural to place it in either Discourse or Pragmatics.

Headline style has long been a subject of scrutiny within both media studies and discourse studies for its peculiarities in linguistic structure, its potential for framing, keying or priming of interpretations, its role in collecting attention and its implications for coercion.

(Molek-Kozakowska 2014: 8)

However, the case of fake headlines is special. Even at the surface level, it requires language manipulation and counterfactual arguments to cause the experience of funniness. Discourse analysis, including Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Pragmatics have mostly ignored the aspects of humour in language use. As a

result, studies on headlines prospered but humorous aspects of (fake) headlines did not see the same response.

It is astonishing that a discipline like CDA, whose principal remit is after all to highlight and to challenge the discourse practices of powerful and interested groups, has not noticed how humour can be used as a tool of repression and ridicule by the powerful, or as a form of resistance by the less powerful, or as an instrument to help galvanize social bonds among the disenfranchised groups.

(Simpson & Mayr 2010: 25)

From an academic perspective, this is a double loss situation. A highly dynamic phenomenon such as 'humour' escapes the critical analysis and the theoretical advancement of the disciplines such as Pragmatics, Discourse, Stylistics and Media Studies remains incomplete. Keeping aside the universal issues, there are numerous reasons that make this kind of a study pertinent. Consider the following:

- a) these fake headlines embody a text.
- b) they involve language manipulations.
- c) they bear partly obvious and partly concealed agenda.
- d) they are able to attract thousands of viewers.
- e) they pick up a diverse range of debatable issues.
- f) they offer windows into the

politics/parapolitics.

These microcosmic reasons form the conceptual basis of this paper. Arguably, some of the above points are more salient than the rest. They do not work in isolation and point to research possibilities from several fields.

2. The metaphorical connections

This section presents fake headlines as instances of advertisements and discusses the use of pictorial metaphors in them.

2.1 An attempt to advertise

Advertisements communicate about certain products using literary, figurative and multi-media devices. While they appear informative and entertaining, they promiscuously home their ideas into the heads of the potential buyers. Therefore, the role of language in media merits scholarly attention.

With the media constructing, rather than just reflecting, our social reality, more attention needs to be devoted to how exactly language is recruited to this aim.

(Molek-Kozakowska 2014: 2)

In fact, the language of advertisement and mass media has received considerable attention from the researchers in humanities and social sciences as well as managements and liberal arts. The

inclusion of advertisements in this discussion is primarily metaphorical. This paper treats the news as well as the headlines of TFN and TUT, as instances of advertisements of certain ideas and politics.

2.2 Pictorial metaphors

Researchers from cognitive sciences as well as linguistics and philosophy have mostly focussed on the verbal aspects of metaphors. Consequently, a potentially significant phenomenon, pictorial metaphor did not receive the attention it deserves.

Although there is an increasing interest from cognitive scientists in metaphor, the vast majority of the publications focus on verbal metaphors, or at least on verbal manifestations of metaphor.

(Forceville 2002: 1)

This paper treats fake news as acts of advertising and advocates the view that they exploit the riches of the pictorial metaphors. The counterfactual headlines concerning this paper also exploit the same resources.

Advertisements, then, provide an excellent corpus for investigating more closely the phenomenon of pictorial metaphor.

(ibid.: 69)

During the last one and half decade, the virtual media have

emerged as a platform that not only offers ease of access and transfer but also adds to the overall aesthetics and value for money.

This has resulted in a deluge of publications on the World Wide Web.

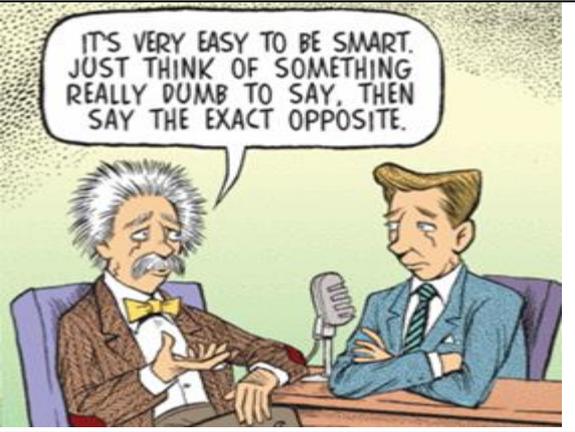
<p>1</p>	<p>Stealing from one is plagiarism stealing from many is research</p>	
<p>2</p>	<p>Revealed: How Einstein became so smart?</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>The actual meaning of 24 x 7 open</p>	

Table 1: Pictorial metaphor

3. Methodology

This study employs a set of methods. At first, it uses the archive search. Next, it involves sorting and corpus building. Following that, it makes use of description and comparative analysis. The data for this study comprises of the news headlines that have appeared in the online portals of TFN & TUT. This study makes use of the archives sections of both the portals to develop a corpus of fake headlines. Consider the following:

1. FIFA World Cup teams send SOS to Dhoni to score last minute goals.
2. Man who believed money can't buy happiness sues his neighbour after finding him happy with a new car.
3. Manager asks for "Minutes of Toilet" after failing to get "Minutes of Meeting."
4. Men all over the country protest to ban "Men Will Be Men" advertisements.
5. New smartphone to automatically disconnect call if "aur batao" phrase used more than thrice.
6. Indian football fans request BCCI to intervene and schedule world cup matches at suitable timings.
7. Switzerland asks India to get details of Swiss bank account holders from Arvind Kejriwal.
8. Rahul Gandhi asks Anna to teach him tricks to become another Kejriwal.
9. Modi shows the way to acche din.
10. Engineering student demands Article 370 to be deployed in his room.
11. IIT student concentrating hard on research in physics to finally get a

banking job.

12. Modi hikes railway fare to improve performance of IRCTC website.
13. Citizens concerned that increased IT exemption limit will take away their rights to boast and crib.
14. Digvijay Singh trolls Narendra Modi.

(Source: The Faking News)

4. Description

The above headlines have appeared on the web portals of TFN and TUT that originated in 2009 and 2011 respectively. These online portals are Indian counterparts of The Onion, The Spoof, The Faux News etc., which are very popular in Europe and America. In appearance, these websites resemble the actual media websites with classified sections such as national, international, sports, cinema etc. These portals have dedicated logos and slogans besides search buttons to track the posts. Their headlines cover all aspects of human life. They are interactive as they have an inbuilt imaginary conversation and they permit live comments where viewers can actually participate. This study prepared the following convenient pairs to classify the headlines collected from both the web portals:

- (a) Products and principles: This set included headlines that focussed on the name of particular brand including popular events organised by political and sports organisations.
- (b) Tickle and reason: This set included the headlines that suggest or

recommend the application of an idea or thing in such a way that it tickles, but with acceptable reasons.

- (c) Lurid and logic: This set contains the headlines that are fake announcements but they follow a logical path.
- (d) Elaborate and crisp notes: The headlines in this set contrast with each other for size. One extreme comprises of very elaborate headlines, which may not need any elaboration while the other extreme embodies very precise headlines, which may be in the process to become funny one-liners.
- (e) Figurative and literal: This is indeed the most populous set all fake

headlines depend on figurative use of language.

Revealed and Friday release are special aspects of these headlines. Revealed presents a satirical humour on certain noticeable aspect of a celebrity’s life-style. Friday being the day on which most Bollywood movies release. These headlines make use of the Friday release and blockbusters. An interesting aspect of these headlines is the occurrence of the headlines includes a sentential announcement associated with a picture. Consider the following as examples of headline from TFN.

1	Vodafone relationship manager asked to manage long distance relationship of couple.	
2	Salman to hire one of his fans from Twitter as lawyer for criminal cases against him.	
3	Busy attending Page 3 events, Bollywood celebs hire duplicates to shoot #CleanIndiaChallenge video.	

4	<p>Aamir Khan says he skipped voting in Mumbai to urge NRIs in Cannes to vote.</p>	
5	<p>Ved Pratap Vaidik and Rajiv Shukla were already there on Mars to welcome Mangalyaan: ISRO.</p>	
6	<p>Hardcore Indian football fan has already forgotten who won the FIFA World Cup.</p>	
7	<p>FIFA World Cup final breaks blackboard's record of being cluelessly watched by millions.</p>	
8	<p>Congress reinstates Shashi Tharoor as the party spokesperson after he promises to spread garbage all around in city.</p>	

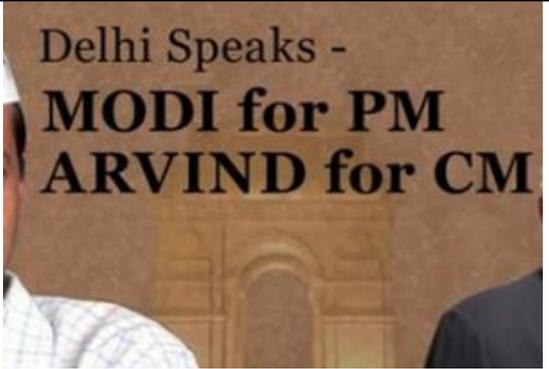
9	Man unknowingly climbs Mount Everest while messaging on WhatsApp.	
10	Professors to send readings on WhatsApp to check if students have read them.	
11	Revealed: Why AAP removed "Modi for PM" poster from its website.	

Table 2: Typical presentation of TFN & TUT

5. Essential comparisons

From the perspective of humour content, the headlines in TFN are funnier than that of TUT. The decision about their relative popularity emerges from the hit counts, i.e., viewership counts on the Internet. The news items and headlines of TFN attract greater number of hits than that of TUT.

In their cognitive structures, the counterfactual headlines and funny one-liners resemble each

other. Consider the following points that highlight their similarities:

- a) Concerning size of the text, both are short;
- b) Concerning nature of the text, both are entertaining.
- c) Concerning structural complexities, both are biclausal and simple.
- d) From psycholinguistic and pragmatic viewpoints, both evoke surprise and ambiguous situations leading to humorous

disambiguation.

- e) From CDA viewpoint, both are transferrable. Therefore, both exist as trademarks, slogans, catchphrases, celebrity statements and status on social networking sites.
- f) Both funny one-liners and the counterfactual headlines act as feeder to each other.

The above points render them synonymous entities. This makes it difficult to decide whether a statement is fit for funny one-liner or fake headline. Therefore, it is equally important to understand their differences. The following table contrasts between the two phenomena:

Sr.	Funny one-liners	Counterfactual headlines
1	The funny one-liners are generic statements and speak about life.	Counterfactual headlines are statements on specific issues.
2	They are usually suggestive and appeal to an individual's personal/collective experiences.	They are usually satirical and force an alternative interpretation using fictitious retelling.
3	They require little background knowledge and their funniness depends on the interlocutors' lack of familiarity with the issue.	They require background knowledge and their funniness at large depends on the interlocutors' familiarity with the issue.
4	The funniness and relevance of one-liners stay evergreen, i.e. to say they are ageless.	The humour and relevance of fake headlines tend to phase-out with time.
5	Funny one-liners can be self-defeating statements and may sound absurd.	Fake headlines are about persons other than the speaker and they often sound real.
6	Funny one-liners are mostly anonymous. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain who said them first.	Fake headlines are projection of socio-political groups. By design, their authorships come out.
7	They speak about humans in general and do not point to any individual.	They mostly target individuals/groups.
8	Linguistically funny one-liners make use of the first person pronouns and self-reducing statements.	Fake headlines mostly use the third person pronouns and reported speech.
9	In terms of reusability, funny one-liners have high frequency of occurrence across different eras.	In terms of reusability, fake headlines have high frequency of occurrence in a particular times.

Table 3: Funny one-liners versus counterfactual headlines

It is also important to differentiate the counterfactual headlines from other entertainment discourse like wits, jokes and slapsticks. Fake headlines differ from the conversational humour like jokes and other kinds of verbally expressed humour. In jokes, the punchline embodies the intended meaning and contributes to the experience of funniness.

Fake headlines and counterfactual news have developed as a trend of language use in the new age media. In fact, they have evolved as genre of a kind. This paper advocates that the scholars in CDA, Humour Studies and Pragmatics provide Fake headlines the status of a genre.

6. Analyses

Since the news headlines have not received the attention they deserve in Discourse and Pragmatics, the options for their analysis did not grow sufficiently. Bremner (1972) offers an elaborate discussion on the typographic aspects of news headlines. However, it is not relevant to this paper as it mostly applies to print media.

It is fair to say that, with only a few exceptions, the analysis of humorous language has not been a feature of Critical Linguistics (CL) or Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

(Simpson & Mayr 2010: 25)

Modern disciplines like CDA, Stylistics, Pragmatics and Cognitive Sciences have bestowed petit attention to mini entertainments like fake headlines. This renders the research situation impoverished.

... it has been a marked failing of CDA that it has not recognized the importance of humour as a form of linguistic, social and cultural praxis.

(ibid.).

This absence of an established system for analysis provides an opportunity to experiment research tools from various disciplines. This section sheds light on the linguistic, corpus and cognitive analyses of counterfactual headlines.

6.1 Linguistic analysis

Discussions concerning the linguistic and stylistic features of advertisements and news headlines are available in plenty in the research literature. A lot of them concern with the humorous aspects of these genres. One aspect that merits a special mention here is the KISS principle. The KISS principle became popular with Kelly Johnson, a US engineer in 1970s. The acronym KISS, then, stood for Keep It Simple Stupid. Later variants of the expression include Keep It Short and Simple or Keep It Simple and Straightforward. Since the news headlines of TFN and TUT exist

on the virtual platforms, they cannot afford to be complex. The language manipulation in these headlines include (re)spelling, argument mismatch, violation of the maxims of conversation, word play etc. They make a judicious use of lexical and syntactic ambiguities and coordinate well between text and images. This study observes that to follow a headline of TFN and TUT, the viewers usually do not need to look up for a word in the dictionary. The counterfactual headlines depend on ambiguous constructions, which in turn depend on manipulations of lexical items and syntax. Since the

lexical, syntactic and semantic aspects are significant from the point of view of reading, a corpus analysis of the headlines also merits a place in this study.

6.2 Corpus analysis

The data of TFN and TUT is available in the electronic format. Therefore, it was not difficult to perform a corpus analysis of the entire data of seven months. An analysis with the Language Technology (LT) extension of Libre Office revealed the following information about the corpus of headline data.

Sr.	Parameter	Data
1	Total number of words	9192
2	Total number of characters	47,632
3	Total number of full stops	680
4	Total number of long words	2596
5	Total number of words per full stop	13.51
6	Total number of different words	3505
7	Lexical variety	0.38
8	Percentage long words	28.24
9	Readability	41.75

Table 4: Corpus analysis of fake headlines

Ultimately, the headlines are available at TFN and TUT for reading. The web portal expects the viewers to read them. This readability criterion will obviously influence the sentence structure and the lexical choice headlines. The above data points to high readability aspect of the text. The

less use of infrequent and long words (words containing seven or more characters) is an index to the same. It is also easy to notice that the average length of a sentence is thirteen and half words. The use of short words and short sentences aid the readability.

6.3 Cognitive analysis

The cognitive mechanisms, including the coercive techniques form the most significant aspect of the headlines. With respect to the cognitive aspects of news headlines, Molek-Kozakowska (2014) discusses seven metaphor-based coercive strategies. The strategies include: (a) Simplifications, (b) Imaging, (c) Animalization, (d) Confrontation, (e) (De)legitimization, (f) Emotionalization and (g) Dramatization. It is evident from the example that Molek-Kozakowska's strategies are quite relevant to the classification and analysis of the counterfactual headlines of TFN and TUT.

In addition, the cognitive consistency and cognitive dissonance is also vital in this kind of study. Marlich (2007) and Cooper & Goren (2007) present an overview of the concepts 'cognitive consistency' and 'cognitive dissonance' respectively. According to Marlich (2007: 148) "cognitive consistency is one of the earliest concepts associated with social psychology." He uses the term 'cognitive' in its usual sense that relates to thoughts and attitude. In addition, by 'consistency', he refers to the balance and symmetry across cognitions. Therefore, combined together the expression 'cognitive consistency' refers to a harmonious

state of mind. In this state, there is no conflict of ideas & intensions and an individual's behaviour is in harmony with his/her beliefs. Marlich (ibid.) recommends the use of 'cognitive consistency' as a tool to understand social psychology explain the diverse aspects of human behaviour. In contrast, cognitive dissonance is an unpleasant emotion and causes disharmony of the mental states. Cognitive dissonance according to Cooper & Goren (2007) is the aversive state of arousal that occurs when a person holds two or more cognitions that are inconsistent with each other.

Given that pleasant is desirable whereas unpleasant is undesirable, most research converge on the following; humans in their day-to-day interaction expect the pleasant and their response to that would be normal whereas the onset or overdose of the unpleasant would adversely affect their response to the communicative event. If this were the fact then what could be the reason for normal joking situations?

They mostly utilize simultaneous portrayal of two ideas that are humorous but not real. On some occasions, the TFN and TUT headlines open up with a real event and latter insert an imaginary idea into it. While on other counts, they open up an imaginary idea and

accommodate the real event into it. Their success lies in the fact that they do it with extra-ordinary precision. The planting of real and imaginary events causes a momentary cognitive dissonance in the viewers. They strike the right balance by assisting the viewers to reach back to cognitive consistency.

7. Conclusions

Though the phenomenon of fake headlines is new, it has a considerable presence on the World Wide Web. From a non-academic standpoint, the real and the fake headlines resemble each other so much, that only a truth table can set them apart. However, from the linguistic and cognitive standpoints, they embody striking dissimilarities. The hidden objectives of fake headlines and the mechanisms by which the headlines achieve their objectives offer exciting research possibilities. This paper presented an analysis of the counterfactual headlines TFN and TUT. For the purpose, it tracked the headlines published by both the portals for seven months and built a corpus of the same.

It is evident from the above discussions that the counterfactual headlines, an emerging genre in humour studies, differ from the actual headlines, advertisements and funny one-liners. In addition,

they often attempt to alter the public opinion on significant issues by the use of wordplay, language manipulations, pictorial metaphors and other cognitive tools. Concerning these, the headlines of TFN outshines that of TUT. This study maintains that Molek-Kozakowska's ideas about the coercive strategies are relevant. In addition, the fake headlines heavily rely upon viewers' desperation to arrive at cognitive consistency and overcome cognitive dissonance. It is very evident that using humour as a vehicle these headlines force a reinterpretation of various socio-political events. Forced reinterpretation is a theoretical position within Humour Studies. The use of this term in the analysis of humour concerns the state of mind involved in drawing inferences. However, in this study this term refers to a smart tool that is abstract and largely intractable. This study observes that these headlines function adopt implicit but coercive ways to disseminate certain socio-political ideas.

7.1 Significance of the study

The fake headlines coming through TFN and TUT provide an excellent corpus of data to study how language manipulation, frame shift and coercive reinterpretations take place. The significance of this paper includes the following:

- a) Development of ideas about

the linguistic and cognitive strategies of humour, satires, parody and spoofs.

- b) Synthesis of approaches from humour studies and cognitive linguistics.
- c) Addition to the body of knowledge about the entertainment discourse.
- d) Application of theories to mini texts such as headlines.
- e) Formation of a corpus of humorous headlines of counterfactual reports.
- f) Ideas about the deliberate transmutation of day-to-day events.

7.2 Limitations of the study

This study restricts its focus on use of language and the manipulations therein resulting in cognitive transmutations. The video programmes like 'So Sorry' & 'Dhol Ki Pol' and caricatures like 'You Said It' & 'Cartoonscapes' are interesting and impactful but it cannot consider them because they are multimodal, that is to say, they employ a host of techniques other than language manipulation and transmutation of the events.

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Appendix

The following counterfactual headlines represents a sample of The Faking News.

1. To shed her image of a dumb girl, Alia Bhatt to play role of a Nobel Prize winner in her next movie.
2. Passers-by leave a man dying on Delhi road assuming it as a social experiment.
3. How MDH Masala and Shilajit Gold capitalized on Suarez World Cup controversy.
4. Case filed against a man with face similar to popular photo of Satyanarayan Bhagwan for drinking alcohol.
5. Seeing temptation for Maggi among boys, Axe to launch Maggi fragrance deo for girls.
6. Lazy corrupt man still to remove his black money from Swiss bank.
7. Book written by ex-member of Gabbar Singh gang reveals Gabbar had a girlfriend.
8. IIT student concentrating hard on research in physics to finally get a banking job.
9. After self-driving car, Google working on developing self-slapping mosquito.
10. Facebook to create a separate wall at each historical monument for Indians to write whatever they want.
11. New football follower runs out of football jokes as World Cup enters knock-out stage.
12. Man starts talking in English as soon as girl walks into Metro coach.
13. After constantly losing "National Spelling Bee" to Indian origin kids, US looking for a new national language.
14. UPA launches ad campaign to increase awareness about the identity of Indian PM.
15. Rahul Gandhi participates in Kaun Banega Crorepati to attract huge crowds.
16. Katrina Kaif to do an item number during Rahul Gandhi's next padyatra.
17. Rahul Gandhi to become Prime Minister of India on Children's Day.
18. Leaked chat of Congress meeting after Rahul Gandhi's outburst against Ordinance.
19. Manmohan Singh takes Priyanka's "Super Prime Minister" compliment literally, wears Superman dress.
20. Mark Zuckerberg to attend Orkut funeral.
21. Swiss banks to freeze all accounts of Bengal origin, in retaliation to their

- overwhelming support to Argentina.
22. Sharapova reading “50 Famous Indians” book to avoid future controversies.
 23. Doctor with clear and readable handwriting found fraud.
 24. Indian men take offence every five seconds, says study.
 25. Only respite for a single man is that his close friend is also single.
 26. Ownership rights over a “selfie” takes two friends to court.
 27. Separatists fear separate settlements for Pandits in valley will make it tough to drive them away, again.
 28. Modi asks Facebook to modify news feed for Indians to suggest “achchhe din” are here.
 29. Sharapova says she doesn’t know who Sachin is; Sachin fan hits his head with tennis racket to forget her.
 30. Google sends special invite to Manmohan Singh to try Project Glass.
 31. Shaving razor confesses to have drunk more blood than a vampire.
 32. Pakistan renames one of its provinces as Kashmir, attacks it and wins it.
 33. India to sue China for faulty remote control after MMS’ brother joins BJP.
 34. BJP to install camera, like one on IPL umpire’s head, on Ramdev to monitor his utterances.
 35. Parliament to introduce new houses for candidates finishing second and third.
 36. Priyanka Gandhi planning to hire Manmohan Singh to teach Vadra the art of handling humiliation.
 37. Congress congratulates Robert Vadra for getting a clean chit from Priyanka Gandhi.
 38. IPL players undergo training to remember which team they are part of as tournament progresses.
 39. Sahara to raise money for Subrata Roy’s bail by filing defamation cases against people mocking him.
 40. Pakistani players who praise Narendra Modi will be included in IPL-8: Giriraj Singh.
- (Source: The Faking News)

Linguistic and Cognitive Mechanisms of Verbal Humour

by Tariq Khan

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TIME SUBMITTED	12-DEC-2016 01:19PM	WORD COUNT	86444
SUBMISSION ID	751803737	CHARACTER COUNT	464807

Linguistic and Cognitive Mechanisms of Verbal Humour

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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www.scribd.com

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Capps. "Why Thinking Critically is Important",
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3

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www.c-s-p.org

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