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Department of English

Investigating the Students' Difficulties in the Reading Comprehension of Humorous Expressions

The Case of Third Year EFL Students at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillments of the requirements for the degree of Master in didactics of foreign languages

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Declaration of the candidate Ghada KERBOUCHE

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "Investigating the Students' Difficulties in the Reading Comprehension of Humorous Expressions: The Case of EFL Third Year Students at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia'' is my own work and all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by means of references. I also certify that I have not copied or plagiarized the work of other students or researchers partially of fully. In case any material is notdocumented, I shall be responsible for the consequences.

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Declaration of the candidate Roumaissa HAMMOUDI

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "Investigating the Students' Difficulties

in the Reading Comprehension of Humorous Expressions: The Case of EFL Third Year

Students at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia'' is my own work and all the sources I have used have

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Dedication

In The Name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful.

"To MOM", Thank you for everything, for being my life boat, for believing in me, for being my support in everything. Thank you for giving me strength and courage to continuewhat I started. Thank you for being the perfect mother, my mother, no one deserves but you, this is for you and without you I wouldn't be. We started this way together, I took the first step with you, you carried me and motivated me, and now here am completing the laststep, and I made it. Thank you my amazing mother.

" To me", it is crazy but yes I want to thank me too, for believing In me, for doing thishard work, for having no days off, for never quitting, for never giving up, for every fight Ihad and I kept going, for all that pain, yes18 year from hard working.

To my angels: "Natchou & Midou and my lovely Granny" thank you for supporting me,protecting me, thank you for everything.

Yes, I made it.

Ghada

Dedication

In the name of Allah the most merciful, the most compassionate.

I dedicate this work:

To the memory of my grandparents.

To my precious father and my tender mother whose support and guided me all the way.

To my lovely sister and brothers

To my little angel: Taki Eddine

To my dear friends

To every person thought me English.

Roumaissa

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

This research attempts to investigate the comprehension difficulties that third year English students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia university-Jijel encounter when reading humorous expressions. The research hypotheses assume that the students' comprehension difficulties of reading humorous expressions are due to their sociolinguistic and cross- cultural incompetence on the one hand and to their limited vocabulary range on the other hand. The data was collected by means of a test randomly distributed to 50 English third year students. The test encompasses 10 humorous expressions that fall under different types of humor. After the analysis of the data obtained from the test, we found out that the students face comprehension difficulties of cultural components embedded within the expressions. Also it is important to note that many students failed to grasp the true meaning of many words used in those humorous expressions. Accordingly, many students were unable to perceive humor that is related to specific sociolinguistic and cultural settings.

Keywords: Reading, Reading Comprehension, Humourous Expressions.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

etc: and so forth.

%: percentage.

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General Introduction

We cannot take everything in a serious way, there should be some fun. Humor plays an important role in reducing life's stresses. So it can be considered as an essential life skill. Mark Twain said that "Humor is the great thing, the saving thing after all. The minute it crops up, all our irritations and resentments slip away, and a sunny spirit takes their place."(Washington times,1907). In addition, Thomas P. Kasulis (1990) claims that humor plays an important role in our understanding of ourselves, our society, and our world at large…it break down barriers and built community (1990, Pp 239_241). However, many researches had been conducted about humor advantages and benefits in different fields, concerning health, business and work, and even everyday life conversations. Many researchers claim that humor now became a useful point in teaching and learning processes, it helps to reduce anxiety and create a worm comfortable atmosphere to learn or teach. Also, it is a way of enriching learner's vocabulary in language acquisition. Although teaching is serious, but teachers are not obliged to be serious all time. Humor may help to build a funny joyful connection between teachers and students. But what about those students who face problems and difficulties in comprehending humor?. In this research, we will investigate the comprehension difficulties that third year English students face when reading of humorous expressions.

1. Background of the Study

There have been many researches about humor; it is a complex topic that has been examined by thinkers on the planet. It is a universe experience in daily life (Dehjalali & Izadpanah, 2017). As the international journal of art and science mentioned in an article titled 'Humor and Learning a Second Language' humor is considered as natural human behavior, it is considered as an important element in teaching/learning the language. Previous research of Cornett and Fisher shows that humor can be beneficial to classroom (Cornett1986, Fisher1997). Most of previous researches took the educational side of humor and how it helped to support language acquisition and gain vocabulary. A research conducted by (Son Bolkan, Dorrin J., Griffni & Alon K., Goodboy, 2018) the research shows that using humor in classroom during explaining the lesson will make students perform better than using serious examples (p. 144_164). Also, an online article to Mr. Pratish Nair (2020) titled "Humor and why it is needed in education" reviewed that learning is most effective when it's fun, it reduces anxiety and it is one of the most powerful point that can help teachers in classroom. Different studies are made in the same rink; humor and its relation to teaching/learning, and how it can be a benefit tool in education.

An article published in the journal of "advanced English studies" investigates about humor and reading comprehension where humor story is a method of teaching reading comprehension through English learning materials design, after testing the hypotheses they found out that after using humour, the students' reading comprehension is improved (Synsu Tong, Andi Asrifon, Yon chen, Headar, Mutmainnah Agussalim, 2019, Pp77-87). Here the question is:

what about those students who do not understand humor? Those who are not capable of comprehending humor, so how can they benefit from it? Our research investigates comprehension difficulties that English students face when reading humorous expression, what kind are those difficulties?

1. Statement of the Problem

The good use of English language is a reflection of students' good level of knowledge especially the cultural package. Language and culture are two related elements, understanding the cultural component is the comprehension of the language. The issue we are investigating here is whether students are able to comprehend the humorous expressions with bear cultural elements.

2. Aim of the Study

This study intends to shed the light on the comprehension difficulties that English third year university students faced when reading humorous expressions.

3. Research Questions

This research is guided by the following questions:

- ✓ What are the comprehension difficulties that English third year university students facewhen reading humorous expressions?

- ✓ Are those students capable of comprehending humor?

4. Hypothesis

Based on the previous questions, we can hypothesize the following:

- ➤ Students difficulties in reading comprehension of humorous expressions can be due totheir cross-cultural and sociolinguistic incompetence, in addition to lack of vocabulary.

5. Research Methodology

The target sample of this research is third year university English students of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel. In order to put the hypothesis under the test and reachthe aim of study, 50 randomly selected students were given a test to answer. The purpose behind is to investigate their ability to comprehend humorous expressions.

6. Significant of the Study

The findings obtained from the study will help to determine what difficulties English students face in the reading comprehension of humorous expressions, so future researchers may try to find solutions to overcome them and help students comprehend humor. Also teaching humor is so beneficial to students: it helps them to enriching their cross-cultural knowledge that is an important part of learning any language. So as they can use it not only in their learning process, but also in their daily lives and conversations.

7. Structure of the Study

This research is divided into two chapters: a theoretical chapter and a practical one.

The theoretical framework contains two sections: the first one deals with reading and reading comprehension, their definitions, types, strategies, models and skills. However, the second section here represents humor, it defines humor with explaining its relation to second language learning and teaching, its pragmatics, types and psychology.

The second chapter is the practical framework that is also divided into two sections: The section number one is about data collection. It consists of information about population and selection of the sample; it discuses also about the procedure of data collection step by step. While the second section is for data analysis and result, it describes the students' test and how it was made and administered.

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In addition to that, it consists of the analysis of students' answers in comparison to the original once. All those analysis will bepresented in tables followed by discussion.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework of Reading Comprehension and Humor

Introduction

As a foreign language, English became a lingua-franca; the language of science, economy, business, education and everything in the world. Learning a language means developing the four skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading and recently they added understanding as a fifth one. Without developing those skills students will face several problems in learning the language. Also, language and culture are two related elements that cannot be separated, learning the foreign language is difficult without understanding the cultural components of this language and the opposite; we cannot understand a particular culture without learning the language. Here, humor is an important part of the culture that is used as a tool in teaching/learning the language. However, there are some students who face difficulties in reading comprehension that lead them to inability of comprehending humorous expressions. This research investigates the comprehension difficulties students face when reading humorous expressions.

This chapter is divided into two sections; the first one is devoted for defining both of reading and reading comprehension, providing there types and strategies, in addition to the models and difficulties. Whereas the second chapter focuses on humors, it defines humor besides its types and psychology, gives information about humor relation to second language learning/teaching. Also, it explores humor pragmatics and theories.

Section One: Reading Comprehension and Humor

This section is an overview about reading and reading comprehension.

1. **Reading**

It is a receptive skill. Anderson et al. (1988) defined reading as the process of making meaning from written texts (p.389-396). According to Wixon, Peters, Weber, and Rober (1987)**,** reading is the process of creating meaning that involves: (a) the reader's exist knowledge; (b) the text information; and (c) the reading context. (p.749_755). Als according to Tarigan (1990, p.7) reading is a process that is carried and used by readers who want to get the message delivered by the author through the medium of words or written language. In the same view, David Nunan (1989, p.33) mentioned "Reading is not an invariant skill, that there are different types of reading skills that correspond to the many different purposes we have for reading". Also, according to Harmer (2007, p. 99) reading is useful for language acquisition. Provided that students more or less understand what they read, the more they read, the better they get at it. In addition, Grabe (2009) defined reading as ''a strategic process in that a number of the skills and processes are needed on the part of the reader to anticipate text information, select key information, organize and mentally summarize information, monitor comprehension, repair comprehension breakdowns, and match comprehension output to reader goals" (p.15).

1. **Types of Reading**

According to Potel and Proveen (2008) there are four types of reading:

1.1 Extensive Reading

In this type of reading, learners read just for the purpose of joyful and develop their skills of reading, it is outside classroom. In other words, it refers to the process of reading outside the classroom for a pleasure. Long and Richards (1971) identify extensive reading as "occurring when students read large amounts of high interest materials, usually out of class, concentrating on meaning "reading for gist" and skipping unknown words". P. 55-58 (Journal of development research). According to (Grabe and Stoller, 2002) extensive reading detects learners to large quantities of material within their linguistic competence (p. 259).

1.2 Intensive Reading

Also called creative reading, it refers to vocabulary and idioms that teacher thought in classroom, usually it exists in literary texts like poetry. Long and Richards (1987) says it is a "detailed in-class analysis, led by the teacher, of vocabulary and grammar points, in a short passage". (p. 30). Rizvi (2005) stated that "text analysis is the process of identifying relationships among different units within the text." (p.243).

1.3 Aloud Reading

This type means to read in loud voice but clearly, it is like reading poems. "It is recommended that reading aloud be used as a teaching routine in every class especially in classes which include students with reading difficulties" (Razinski,

Padak, 2004). It allows learners to become more familiar with literacy (Wood, Salvetti, 2001, p.76_83).

1.4 Silent Reading

It means making the students read without a voice or by heart in order to focus and concentrate on the text for better comprehension. It gives students the opportunity to pace their reading and regulate the reading speed to facilitate comprehension (Garcia, Melero, &Izquierdo, 2014).

2. Reading Strategies

Brown defines strategies as the "specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned design for controlling and manipulating certain information" (brown, 2001) .

2.1 Skimming

Skimming is to move the eyes quickly looking for general idea and ignoring the details. According to Yan Shen (2009) skimming is "a fast reading skill that does not require reading word by word, but it requires high degree concentration"(p.16) Grellet (1999) identified skimming as "quickly running one's eyes over a text to get the gist of it" (p.5).

3.2Scanning

Scanning is detailed reading for the purpose of looking for specific information. Yan Shen (2009) defines scanning as "a helpful technique especially when students are looking for answer to a particular question, scanning involves moving through the passages seeking specific words and sentences" (p.18). Konar(2009) stated that "scanning involves reading the passage slowly and carefully and looking for some particular information in which you are interested." (p.154).

Grellet said that readers scan to "locate specifically required information."(p.5)

3.3 Inference

Also called reading between the lines. Mikulecky and Jefferies (2004) states that good readers constantly make inference as they read. That means they think like a detective andlook for clues in the text. Then they use these clues to guess about the text and about the writer's idea. This is especially important when some ideas are not directly states (as citedin Students' Reading Techniques Difficulties in Reading, 2016, p.7).

4.Reading Models

Davis (1995) states that: ''A reading model is a theory of what is going on in the reader's eyes and mind during reading and comprehending (or miscomprehending a text).These models try to predict and explain reading behavior. The readings instructions are built on the bases of the reading models.''(p.59)

4.1The Top-Down Model

This model believes that reading is coming directly from the brain i.e Readers use their existing knowledge to the text in the reading process. Brown (1998) clarified that, "this model suggests that readers begin to read by drawing on what they know about the structure and the meaningfulness of language, the structures of stories and other genres and their knowledge of the world to predict the general meaning and specific words in context" (Brown, 1998, p.9).

(Smith, 1979) a Reader guesses what the text is about according to their existing knowledge, they will continue to read the text as long as it confirms their prior expectations.

Harmer (2007) stated that: In top-down processing, the reader (or listener) gets a general view of the reading or listening passage by, in some way, absorbing the overall picture. (…) In bottom-up processing, on the other hand, the reader or listener focuses on such things as individual words, phrases or cohesive devices and achieves understanding by stringing these detailed elements together to build up a whole. (p.270).

4.2 The Bottom-up Model

It is called bottom-up because it starts with the smallest units and goes up to the largest unit. Brown (2007) defined it as using metal data-processing device to put linguistic signal in order. Another definition added by Eunjeo (2009) that is "focusing on individual words, pausing for grammatical difficulties and repeated readings. This model declared as a decoding process of constructing meaning at the "bottom" to the larger units at the top(Carrell & Eistenhold, 1983).

Farrel (2008) clearly stated it by saying that information is first processed in the smallest sound units and then moves to letters, words, phrases and full sentences.

understanding or, comprehension of the text will ultimately depend on the reader's knowledge of vocabulary and syntax" (p.58).

In Carrel's (1987) words, reading is seen as: a decoding process of reconstructing the author's intended meaning via recognizing the printed letters and words , and building up a meaning for a text from the smallest textual units at the 'bottom " (letters and words) to larger and larger units at the 'top' (phrases, clauses, inter sentential linkages . (p.2).

4.3 The Interactive Model

Stanovich (1980) argued that this model gathers the features of the bottom up and the top down and gives reading more meaning and make readers more involved in reading, they use their knowledge of the subject theme, their pre experience of written words, theirreading and their expectations to make prediction about the reading text.

Grabe (2009) stated the assumption to understand the interactive model as "useful elements from bottom-up and top-down views can be combined in some massively interactive set of processes." (p.89).

Stanovich (1980) noted that "interactive models of reading appear to provide a more accurate conceptualization of reading performance than to strictly top-down and bottom-up models." (p.32). He believes that a reader with a weak word recognition skill will depend on context. However, readers with strong word recognition skills will not, he noted this view by saying "the interactive model aim at compensating for deficiencies at any other level." (p.13).

5.Reading Comprehension

According to MCKEE(2012) reading comprehension can be defined as the ability to understand a text, to analyze the information, and to interpret correctly what the writer is stating (p46). It is "intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interaction between text and reader" (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Reading comprehensions is a complex interaction among automatic and strategies cognitive processes that enables the reader to create a mental representation of the text (Evan De Brock & Espin).

Reading comprehension is defined as "a thinking process by which a reader selects facts, information, or ideas from printed materials; determines the meanings the author intended to transmit; decide how they relate to previous knowledge; and judge their appropriateness and worth for meeting the learner's own objectives" Veeravagu, et al (2010, p.206).

Reading comprehension is the application of a skill that evolved for other purposes (listening or oral comprehension) to a new form of input (text). Unlike listening comprehension, reading comprehension is not something for which our brains have evolved. Whereas oral comprehension seems to develop "naturally" with minimal deliberate intervention, reading comprehension is more challenging and requires deliberate instruction. Humans have been accomplished in oral comprehension for 100,000 years or more (Donald, 1991), and virtually all humans do it; reading comprehension has only been practiced for 5,000 years, and for most of that time the majority of humans did not do it (Olson, 1994). It should not be surprising that reading

comprehension is difficult. The application of comprehension to text amplifies our mental capacities. It is fundamental to full participation in society, now and for the foreseeable future.

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majority of humans did not do it (Olson, 1994). It should not be surprising that reading comprehension is difficult. The application of comprehension to text amplifies our mental capacities. It is fundamental to full participation in society, now and for the foreseeable future.

6. Reading Comprehension Skills

Reading comprehension skills are those techniques that help students to understand what they are reading.

a) Decoding

Carrekr (2011, p.3) defined decoding as "the ability to recognize words in print without conscious efforts". Not only but also Shonkweilern (1989, p.38) defined it as the process of interpreting the meaning of the words, phrases and statements that the writer of a passageintends to convey.

Decoding also can define as the ability to transform printed letter strings into a phonetic code (Perfetti, 1985).

b) Fluency

Fluency is a prerequisite skill to comprehension. It is the automatic recognition of words that frees up the cognitive capacity required for comprehending the meaning of words (Pressly, 2002). It considered a bridge between decoding and comprehension (Pkulski & Chard, 2005).

Moreover, according to Piper(2010) reading fluency is the ability to read a text easily. Reading fluency actually has four parts: accuracy, speed, expression and

comprehension. Each part is important, but no single part is enough on its own. A fluent reader is able to coordinate all four aspects of fluency …. Fluency is the bridge between being able to read (or decode) words and to comprehend or understand what is read. (P.4).

c) Working Memory

Working memory is our ability to work with information (Alloway, 2010). This higher-level skill is involved in directing attention to a task despite distraction or interference(Cowan, 2006; Engle, Tuholski, Laughlin, & Conway, 1999). Working memory is linked to a range of cognitive activities during the school years, from reasoning tasks to verbal comprehension to mathematical skills (see Cowan & Alloway, 2008, for a review).

Working memory is distinct from short-term memory, which typically refers to remembering information for a brief period, usually a few seconds (Alloway, Gathercole, & Pickering, 2006; see McGrew, 2009)

Working memory is the ability to work with information (Alloway, 2010). Working memory is distinct from short-term memory, which typically refers to remembering information for a brief period, usually a few seconds (Alloway, Gathercole, & Pickering, 2006).

Working memory has also been identified as an integral part of reading comprehension. IT is defined as an executive function responsible for keeping andupdating information in the mind (Rothlisberger, Neuenschwander, Cimeli, & Roebers, 2013).

d) Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge is a consistent predictor of reading comprehension from fourth through eighth grades as well (Bos & Anders, 1990; Yovanoff, Duesbery, Alonzo, & Tindal, 2005). The National Reading Panel (2000) states that vocabulary instruction facilitates reading comprehension developments especially fast exposition to vocabulary words.

e) Background Knowledge

A reader's background knowledge is necessary in building a coherent representation of a text because the readers' background knowledge affected how well they comprehend what they read. Thus, according Hammond, Snow, and Serry (2021,p.214-240) a well connected memory storage facilitates quicker retrieval and use of relevant information. In addition, Prior content knowledge supports relevant comprehension and learning i,e readers with more prior knowledge consistently outperform readers with less, indicating that increased background knowledge in an area may help less skilled readers compensate for a general comprehension.

7.Reading comprehension difficulties

Reading comprehension is an important issue in EFL teaching and learning, several studies mentioned that most of EFL students encounter difficulties while reading a text. Frestisia (2021,p.236-240) mentioned that there are some factors that faced students in the reading comprehension, these factors reflect on students who have problems in phonemic awareness, problems in the process of sounds of letters, and problems with word recognition. These factors are including: the lack of vocabulary and background knowledge and the linguistics problems (phonology, semantic, syntactic, and lexical).

7.1 The Lack of Vocabulary and Background Knowledge

According to Frestisia (2021, p.236-240) vocabulary and the existing knowledge are two important skills that needed in a language teaching and learning. However, there are many of students have problem in vocabulary. Thus the lack of vocabulary knowledge has impact the understanding process of the text. In other words, the students who know morewords and synonyms are able to understand what they read.

7.2 The linguistics problems

Frestisia (2021,p.236-240) highlighted that Khansir and Paked believed that linguistics elements are important in learning a language because the lack of linguistics competence may effects the student's process of comprehension. The linguistics problems include:

a) Phonological problems

Phonology is a branch of linguistics deals with the phonological system. In reading, phonology is directed for learning to read the alphabetic writing system i,e the learners faced problems with the way to read variety of consonant sound (Frestisia, 2021,p.236- 240).

b) Semantic problems

It known as the branch of linguistics that concerned with meaning, thus the students need to understand the meaning of words in a given text, however; many students have problem in understanding meaning of words because the lack of vocabulary(Frestisia, 2021,p.236-240).

c) Syntactic problems

Syntax refers to the study of rules and structure of a statement. In reading, it deals withthe ability to consider the structure not the meaning (Frestisia, 2021, p.236-240).

d) Lexical problems

It refers to the vocabulary of a language, it is supported by researchers that the learner's ability to understand what they read is related to their lexical knowledge (Frestisia, 2021, p.236-240).

Section Two: Humor

This section presents humor definition, theories and its type (puns, jokes, irony and sarcasm). Explaining the relation of humor to: laughter, second language acquisition, andpragmatics (covering speech acts).

1. Humor Definition

Montogomery said "Humor is a perceptual and a cognitive process involving an ability to recognize and appreciate the absurd and incongruous aspects of a situation" (1997, p.170). Also Walker defined it as "the ability to smile and laugh and to make others do so" (Walker, 1998, p.3). It can be divided into three categories; jokes "sometimes said or done to provoke laughter" (Snyder, 2011, p.51), spontaneous conversational humor, and finally accidental humor (Morrison, 2012, p.25). Humor has developed as a universal means of communication and a social influence with various functions (Martin, 2007, p.20).

2. Humor types

2.1 Jokes

Jokes are oral verbal humor. The linguists Robert Hetzron offers the definition: " a joke is a short humorous piece of oral literature in which the funnies culminates in the final sentence called the punch line… In fact, the main condition is that the tension should reach its highest level at the very end. No continuation relieving the tension should be added. As for its being oral, it is true that jokes may appear printed, but when further transferred, there is no obligation to reproduce the text as in the case of poetry" (1991). According to Oxford Dictionary, joke is saying something funny and

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laughable to make people amused. Therefore, Daynel (2009, p.1284) mentioned that a joke refers to the form of verbal humor,

> Produced orally in conversations or published in collections. According to Sherzer (1985, p.216) considered a joke as a discourse unit consisting of two parts, the set up and the punch line. Morrison (2008) defined joke as a short story or series of words spoken or communicated with the intent of being laughed at or found humorous by the listener or thereader (p.160).

2.2. Irony and Sarcasm

Irony is frequently addressed in humour literature (e.g. Norrick 1994, 2003; Giora 1998; Jorgensen 1996; Kotthoff 2003; Attardo 2000; Attardo et al. 2003; Partington 2006, 2007).However, Sarcasm is often considered as a form of hostile humor, one of the four main types of humor or humor styles (Martin, Puhlik-Dors, Lorsen & Weir, 2003). Also, sarcasm is often harmful to individuals' well-being and interpersonal relations (Bowes &Katz, 2011; Colston, 1997; Freud, 1928).

2.3 Puns

Puns are immensely complex and diversified humorous forms, which never cease to garner scholarly interest (Attardo 1994, Ritchie 2004, Dynel 2009). Punning is one of themost common forms of speech play; it is also regarded as one of the lowest forms of wit (Augarde, 1984). According to Webster's Dictionary pun is, ―the usually humorous use of a word in such a way to suggest two or more of its meanings or meaning of another word similar in sound. Dynel (2009) defined the term pun, he said ''a pun can be definedas a humorous verbalization that has (prototypically) two

interpretation couched in purposeful ambiguity of a word or a string of words (collocations or idioms), dubbed the punning element, manifesting itself in one form (or two very similar ones) but conveyingtwo different meanings''(p.1289). In the same light of thought, Koestler (1964) define by another definition which is ―the dissociation of a single phonetic form with twomeanings – two strings of thought tied together by an acoustic knot (p.65).

3.Laughter

Laughter is a common, species-typical human vocal act and auditory signal that is prominent in social discourse (Provine, 1990). It is like smiling and talking, is performed almost exclusively during social encounters; solitary laughter seldom occurs except in response to media, a source of vicarious social stimulation (Provine & Fisher, 1989). Laughter in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary is defined as the act or sound of laughing. And in Cambridge dictionary is defined as the sound or act of laughing. Another definition of by (Ruch et al., 2019) which is ''laughter is both a social signal and an expression of emotion with several behavioral and physiological components (p.9)''.

4.Humor and pragmatics

Chapman and Clarck defined pragmatics as "an aspect of the study of language in use. It is concerned with how language users interact, communicate and interpret linguistic behavior" (2014, p.1). Humor involves creating implausible or ambiguous literal meanings which can be interpreted as amusing; there are other situations in which literal meanings are not enough to their own, and for which pragmatics interpretations can help including irony (Hoicka, Jutsum, & Gatti, 2008; Rokoczy, Tomasllo, & Striano, 2004). Also, pragmatic interpretations turn early humor production and comprehension into successful communications (Hoicka & Gatti, 2004).

5. Speech Acts

5.1 Locutionary act

Locutionary speech act is roughly equivalent to uttering certain utterance with certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to meaning in traditional sense (Austin, 1962, p.108). Cutting (2002, p.16) states that locutionary is what is said. Also, Yule (1996) said that locutionary act is producing meaningful utterances. In short it is any utterance which contains a meaningful statement. For example: "the baby is crying" or "the sky is blue".

5.2 Illocutionary Act

Illocutionary act is performed via the communicative force of an utterance, such as promising, apologizing, offering (Yule, 1996, P.48). It is related to the intonation

of the speaker. Austin (1962) states that illocutionary act is the act of doing something. for example: "it is raining", it becomes an illocutionary speech act when it is performed for example in order to explain for someone the fact that it is raining outside.

5.3 Perlocutionary Act

According to Austin (1975, p.107) "perlocutionary act(s) always include some consequences; perluctionary acts are what we bring about or achieve by saying something (Austin, 1975, p.109). Gu(1993) objects to the causal analysis of perlocutionary acts on the following grounds. In other words, refers to impression made on the listener. Some of the perlocutionary effects are themselves actions of the hearer's. For example: when someone says "it is raining" the listener' reaction is to take an umbrella with him.

6. Humor Theories

6.1 Relief Theory

The Relief Theory is a hydraulic explanation in which laughter does in the nervous system what a pressure-relief valve does in a steam boiler. The theory was sketched in Lord Shaftesbury's 1709 essay "An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humor," the first publication in which *humor* is used in its modern sense of funniness (Morreall, 2012).

6.2 Superiority Theory

According to Adrian Bardon "the superiority theory is casts as an attempt to account forall cases of humor we find in comedy and in life is based on ridicule,

wherein we regard the object of amusement as inferior and/ or ourselves as superior" (2005, p.453).

6.3 Incongruity Theory

Incongruity theory is a surprise, when one gets something that is unexpected, which can be applied to all types of humor (Harper, 2016). According to Schopenhauer (1883) "The cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept of the real objects which have been through it in same relation, and the laugh itself is just an expression of this incongruity" (As cited in Humor and incongruity, 1994).

7.Humor Psychology

Ruch Willibald mentioned in his book that "Psychology is about people; hence the psychology of humor refers to the study of humor and people, not humor of humorous materials only" (2008, p.17-100). Also he add that for psychology of humor we need to be precise in behavior descriptions and phenomena involved, such as the cognitive process that is involved in funny remark creation (2008).), Like Raskin stated, for psychology of humor, we need to be precise in describing the behaviors and phenomena involved, like the cognitive processes involved in the creation of a funny remarks, or the many levels of the emotional response to a brilliant joke when explaining humor behavior we ideally want to arrive at lows, such as "perceived funniness of a joke varies inverted u-form as a function of the degree of incongruity, and when we study whether extraverted individuals smile more at a clowning experimenter than introvert we predict humor (2008, p. 17-101).

8. Humor and language Learning/Teaching

Teaching and learning are serious educational processes, but it is not necessary that teachers should be serious all the time. Humor is recommended to be engaged in the learning process as useful tool that would help students to learn fast especially vocabulary. Humor creates a nice, comfortable joyful atmosphere in the classroom. When students do not feel that they are obliged to learn, they will love what they are learning, perform better and give more attention. Several mechanisms have been proposed to explain why lectures material that is accompanied by humor might be learned and remembered better than information that is presented in a more serious manner (Oppliger, 2003; Teslow, 1995).

The role of humor has been a challenge to establish in education. Learning in classroom can be stressful for both teachers and learners, and in this context the use of positive humor helped to make the class more comfortable, interesting and enjoyable, to decrease anxiety, and to have an attractive and friendly relation between teachers and students. Therefore, there are some situations where the students achieve better results in learning due to the reduction of anxiety through the use of humor (Bell,2017,p.444-452).

Conclusion

This chapter was the theoretical framework of the research that deals with reading and reading comprehension in the first sections, where definition of both elements is presented. It introduce reading strategies, skills and models giving description to each part, covering

reading comprehension skills at the end of section one. Whereas the second sections tackled humor definition and its four main types (jokes, puns, irony and sarcasm), exploring the role of humor in pragmatics; covering also speech acts, humor and language teaching/learning, humor psychology and humor theories, in addition to humor and laughter.

Chapter two: Data collection, Results and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter represents the practical part of the research. It presents the collected data; laid an analysis, and finally elaborated on the discussion of the results. The chapter attempts to investigate the comprehension difficulties third year English students of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel come upon when reading humorous expressions. It contains two sections; the first one introduces the sampling and population, which level we worked with, based on what we chose it, and how many students were selected. Also, it describes the data collection procedure. The second section sets forth the data analysis obtained from the test and the results, it describes the students test, the kind of the expressions used. In addition to the administration of the test, under what circumstances did the students take the exam? Explaining the process of gathering data and how it was. Next, there is students' answers analysis, using a table to describe each expression using speech acts (Locutionary act, Illocutionary act, Perlocutionary act was omitted because the test is written).

Section one: Data Collection

1. Population and Sampling

The population of this research consists of English third year students of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University- Jijel. From this population, 50 students were selected randomly to answer the test. The purpose behind obtaining third year students is that they are supposed to have better comprehension skills of humorous expressions. In addition to that, it is easy to collect the data from them since our supervisor teaches students of this level.

1. Data Collection Procedure:

This is a qualitative research where 50 participants were asked to explain 10 humorous expressions. Because of the epidemiological situation of corona virus and the system of studying in cohorts, in addition to time constrains, it was hard to collect 50 students who finished their sixth semester exams. Fortunately, our supervisor collected their emails during exams invigilation. Then, he communicated with them via emails the date, time and place asking them kindly to come answer the test. All the participants were present; they answered and returned the papers back.

Section 02: Data Analysis and Result

1 Students Test

1.1 Description of the Students Test

The exploratory test encompasses 10 expressions; falling under different types of humor (jokes, puns, irony and sarcasm). The participants were asked to explain their meaning without being told that the expressions are humorous and without explaining or translating anything to them.

Most of the expressions are famous; they were taken from the internet and some of them are similar to the expressions used in Arabic language (expression number 05 and 06). Also, the language used is comprehensible and the words are very clear for a third-year student. They are not complicated. The students' response will help us to investigate their comprehension difficulties when reading the said expressions.

1.2 Administration of the Test

The selected expressions were administered by the supervisor and a researcher to the participants (50 third-year English students) in classroom 4 and 5 (English department of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia university-Jijel). They were kindly asked to sit one in a table and were given free and unlimited time to think and explain the expressions with no pressure and no provided help concerning the explanations or translations, the' working environment was very

good and comfortable.

1.3 The Analysis of the Students' Test Results

Concerning the test analysis, we used the method of Locutionary , Ilocutionary and perlocutionary act that we already covered it in the theoretical part. But, we were obliged to omit perlocutionary act because the test was written not oral so, we cannot observe the reaction of the students when they hear the expression.

The answers of students will be compared to the original explanation. Although all the participants were present (50 students) but they did not answer all the expression, some of them left it empty and the other wrote that they did not understand it. Even those who answered the majority of them provided responses that are far from the meaning, they did not get the humor in the expression, they focused on the grammatical meaning, and they translated the expression as it is or word by word without paying attention to what kind this expression is, there was strange expression that contains another hidden meaning like the expression number 07 and 08. The rest easy once like number 05 and 06 they have similar expression in Arabic language, the rest of them are clear, but students gave dramatic answers that have no relation to humor.

The up- coming tables is divided into 4 columns, the first column contain the Locutionary act (the literal and grammatical meaning), the second one is for the Illocutionary act (the notion of the author), the third consist of number and percentage of students' who did not respond the last one is for the total. Each table followed by a description of the data analysis of students' answers.

Table 01: Students' Answers of Expression N°01

The first time I sang in the church chair; two hundred people change their religion.

Illocutionary Act	Locutionary Act	No Answer	Total
16	31	3	50
32%	62%	6%	100%

As the table shows concerning the illocutionary act, the majority of students that present 62% of the total number did not get the humor in the expression, they explained it according to the semantic meaning; they said that the singer's voice was very effective and so touching that he made people change their religion to Christianity.

32% explained it nearly closed to the exact humorous meaning that is the singer's voice is so bad and annoying that he referred to him as the reason for changing the religion of the audience and leave the church. Finally, 6% did not provide any answer. They probably did not understand it, all of them left empty.

Table 02: Students' Answers of Expression N °02

Santa Clause helpers are known as subordinate Clauses

Illocutionary Act	Locutionary Act	No Answer	Total
21	25	4	50
42%	50%	8%	100%

We can notice from the table that from 50 participants, 21 students get the hidden meaning of the expression which is the expression relates the name of Santa Clause to the dependent Clause concerning written expression. The rule says that the dependent clauses need to subordinate clauses to complete and clarify their meaning. Referring to Santa Clause as the dependent clause, Santa helpers are considered as subordinate clauses in humorous form. While 25 one explained it word-for-word, they thought that Santa Clause helpers are called subordinate clauses, they did not notice the relation in the name between Santa Clause name and his helper with dependent clause and subordinate clauses. The remaining 4 did not answer.

Table 03: Students' Answers of Expression N °03

Whoever said money cannot buy happiness did not know where to shop.

Illocutionary act	Locution act	No Answer	Total
21	29	0	50
48%	52%	0	100%

The table above shows that from the whole sample, 29 students explained it as it is written (the literal meaning) which is who said money cannot buy happiness did not know the perfect place or shop to buy things or stuff that can make him/her happy, they focused on the word shop and buy and then tried to find an explanation that is related to those words. However, the rest (29 one) provide almost the same close explanation that is money can make you happy if you know where to spend it and when it helps you to get all what you need and what makes you live luxury life with no problems. It can be noticed that all the participants responded to this expression. Most of the students' answers were hilarious. They get the sense of humor and it was obvious in their explanation of the expression's meaning.

Table 04: Students' Answers of Expression N °04

I was thinking about how people seem to read the bible a whole lot more as they get older, then it drowned on me. They are cramming for their final exam.

Illocutionary act	Locutionary act	No Answer	Total
21	21	08	50
42%	42%	16%	100%

It is obvious from the table that 21 of students answered it very well. They understood the meaning of the expression that when a person gets older more, he realize that he is close to death. That is why they read the bible a lot to prepare for the afterlife (final exam) and their faith become stronger because of the fear from death. On the other side, 21 one provide different explanations to the expression above, most of them said that it means when people get old, they are not able to do things like before so they have plenty of time, they occupy it with reading the bible. Their answers were very serious; they did not get the humor in the expression. Finally, the rest 8 students left the space blank, which considered as a big number for a very clear and easy expression and two of them ask the researcher about the meaning of the

expression saying that they did not understand it.

Table 05: Students' Answers of Expression N °05

Marriage is the only war which you sleep with the enemy.

Illocutionary act	Locutionary act	No Answer	Total
18	21	1	50
36%	42%	2%	100%

Like we see in the table above, from 50 students only 18 one explained the expression correctly; they understood that marriage is like a lovely fake war so that husband and wife are considered as enemies because they are fighting all the time. But at the end, they will sleep with each other, solving all the problems and returning to fight at the other day. However, the majority of students (21 students) provided different dramatic explanations. Most of them said that in marriage, it is important to choose the right person in order not to live in a war. Also some of them said that marriage is a project where you find a friend or an enemy. They concentrated on the

word war and enemies and started to make explanations relating those two words about understanding couples and successful relations. Here only one student did not answer. Finally, most of them did not get the humorous side in this expression although the expression is not complicated at all.

Table 06: Students' Answers of Expression N° 06

Happiness is having a large, loving and close-knit family in another city.

Illocutionary act	Locutionary act	No Answer	Total
32	17	01	50
64%	34%	2%	100%

The table shows that 32 students provided a half correct explanation that is having a family in another city gives you the opportunity to travel and spend holidays there; changing the place and even people, it is clear when you read the expression. However, the hidden one is that having a family in another city means that you will live far away from problems and misunderstandings (maintaining relationships) and the relation will stay stable, this is the other half that 17 students explained. It was obvious from the answers that students were expressing their lives and their family's relationships. Most of them talked about his/her personal familial experience. Students here activated their feelings where answering the expression, their responses were very emotional. Concerning this expression, only one student did not answer the space left blank.

Table 06: Students' Answers of Expression N° 07

a) What kind of cake do ghosts like?

b) Eye-scream cake

Illocutionary act	Locutionary act	No Answer	Total
26	21	03	50
52%	42%	6%	100%

The previous table shows that 26 students from the whole sample (50 students) understood the right meaning of the expression that is ghosts like to see fear in people eyes. Although the expression is grammatically clear and you can get the meaning when you read it, 21 students gave answers which do not have any relation to the expression. May be they confused and lost focus, that is why they did not read it well because the second sentence "Eye-scream" would explained it all. Unlike reading the expression, you will probably think of ice-cream like most of those 21 students did. In addition to other answers, like ghosts do not exist or ghosts do not eat cakes eat… etc. One of them said that she does not know that ghosts eat cakes she said that its new information for her, their answers here do not show that they are third year students because when you read the expression you will get the meaning without any need think in other secondary meaning. So, we can say that students did not get the humorous side of the expression. Finally, 3 students did not answer they lefts it empty.

Table 08: Students Answers of Expression N° 08

_Did you hear about the guy who cut off the left side of his body?

_He is all right now

41

Illocutionary act	Locutionary act	No Answer	Total
30	17	03	50
60%	34%	6%	100%

The table shows the percentage and number of students that are correct, wrong or didnot answer. This expression is very confusing. It is a joke which means that the guy who cut off the left side of his body all he has now is the right side. 30 students understood thejoke and we felt it in their answers. The other 17 students gave us two kinds of answers. The first one was a bit serious, dramatic, emotional and really interesting, they said that since he cut off his left side (his heart cause the heart is on the left side of the body) he canfeel no more emotions like: betrayed, disappointment, sadness…ect. So he cannot be hearted anymore and he will not feel bad about what happened or about what will happen,that why he is all right (means feeling good, they refer it to the feeling not the side here) feeling no pain (emotional one).

In addition to that some of them said that a guy cut off his left side cannot still alive how it is possible and this is incorrect sentence, some of the participants asked about the meaning here. So they did not get the joke and the humor in the expression.

Table 09: Students Answers of Expression N° 09

Do not worry about what people think. They do not do it very often.

Illocutionary act	Locutionary act	No Answer	Total
5	45	0	50
10%	90%	0	100%

The table above shows that only 5 students from the whole sample (50 students) get the exact meaning of the expression and explained it correctly. This expression is a verbal irony; it means that we should not worry about what people think about us because they donot even think. But the rest 45 students provided different answers

that are far from the exact meaning like we should not worry about what people think about as and we should keep going and not care about any one, and people opinion in us does not make any different they want to break you, other explained it like people

are busy in their lives and they have no time to think about others and each one is caring about his own business. We felt like they were expressing their selves in their responses. Finally, the most interesting thing is that all students answered.

Table 10: Students' Answers of Expression N ° 10

Nice perfume. How long did you marinate in it?

Illocutionary act	Locutionary act	No Answer	Total
19	16	05	50
38%	32%	10%	100%

Like we notice from the table, 19 students explained correctly the meaning of the expression. It is a pun used when someone put too much perfume. At the other hand, 16 students did not give the exact meaning although the expression is very clear. Students getconfuse because of the word "marinate" and most of them asked about its meaning, they did not understand its meaning, only one student mentioned that the verb marinate is related to chicken and meat. Finally, 5 students provided no answer, 2 of them wrote thatthey did not understand.

2.Discussion of the Results

Based on the analysis of students' answers to the test, we can conclude that most of students' difficulties are due to the lack of vocabulary, because half of the participants kept asking about the meaning of different words when they were answering the test. Also, they wanted to translate some other words and sentences mainly as they are written. However, just few others gave an importance to what is the hidden meaning and what kind of expressions which is half of the answer, even students who understood the meaning did not know how to explain it using appropriate words . One of the participants said that she knows the meaning but she did not know how to express it. Here we can say that students here lack the vocabulary knowledge. Obviously, poor comprehension is poor reading.

Besides that, the chosen expressions are commonly used in English, which is a foreign language for students. It has a relation to cultural background. If those expressions were given to English natives, definitely they will explain them clearly and comprehend them very well, exactly like if we gave students expressions belongs to Arabic culture. So, students need to read and search more about the cultural components of English, the matter

here is similar to the case of idioms and proverbs, their meaning is related to culture. Language and culture are two related elements that can never be separate, no one can understand the language of a speech community without knowing its culture, and no one can search and discover a culture without being able to speak

the language related to. Concerning this point, we can say that one of the difficulties students face when reading humorous expressions is the cultural components that those expressions bear.

Although those expressions belongs to other foreign culture, there are some common once like the fifth one" Marriage is the only war which you sleep with the enemy", this expression already exists in Arabic in humorous form, but we noticed that most of them provided answers that have no relation to the expression, so students have more difficulties more than lack of vocabulary and cultural components. Students were not concentrating in what they are reading or writing, they focused only in one point which is translating the sentence to understand it.

The other problem students face were linguistic problems: lexical, syntactic and semantic issues based on their answers structure and the language they used.

To sum up, based on the previous findings we conclude that students' difficulties when reading comprehension of humorous expressions are due to lack of vocabulary knowledge, cultural component difficulties and linguistically problems (syntactic, lexical, semantic) .

Conclusion

To conclude, this was the practical chapter of the research that investigates the students' difficulties in the reading comprehension of humorous expressions- case of third year English students of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia university-Jijel. The collected data from the test was analyzed, giving importance to each detail and discuss

the results based on the findings trying to cover all the gaps and figure out what kind of difficulties those students face. It provides an explanation of sampling and data collection procedure besides how the test was administered.

Finally, like it was expected in the hypothesis, the difficulties that students face in the reading comprehension of humorous expressions are mostly due to their inability to perceive the sociolinguistic background of the selected expressions. The participants' cross-cultural incompetence was frequently spotted while analyzing their responses. Moreover, the participants' poor vocabulary storage had a remarkable impact on their ability to perceive humor that the selected expressions convey.

General Conclusion

This research attempted to investigate about students' comprehension difficulties when reading humorous expressions. To test the heypo thesis, a qualitative methodology was followed. The research is divided into two chapters, starting with the first one that deals with reading and reading comprehension, it provided definitions for both of them and explained their different skills, strategies and models in the first section. Moving to the second section that focused on humor, it tackled humor from different sides (in second language teaching/learning, humor psychology, humor types and theories) .Thereafter, the second chapter which is the practical framework of the study tends to investigates the hypotheses. As a tool to collect data, a test was given to a sample of 50 third year English students of Mohameed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel. The test consisted of 10 humorous expressions that belong to (jokes, irony and sarcasm, puns), students were asked to explain those expressions. Their answers would be analysed into table by using Locutionary and Illocutionary method, organizing each one in a table followed by a description and then comparing them to the original ones.

After the careful analysis and the discussion of findings the results shows that students' comprehension difficulties when reading humorous expressions are due to their cross-cultural incompetence and lack of vocabulary, also their inability to comprehend sociolinguistic and cultural knowledge. Finally, the hypotheses of the research are confirmed.

2. Limitation of the Study

Although the working plan was good at the beginning, this research has many limitations starting with the new studying system of corona pandemic, students were studying in groups, and each year has just three weeks. So, reaching them was a problem especially because of the limited short time. In this situation, it was almost impossible to collect 50 students after they finished their sixth semester exams. Here, the supervisor contacted them by email and asked them kindly to come in a particular day and place to answer the given test.

Also, we had to omit one element in the students' answers analysis on the test which is"perlocutionary act", this type of analysis requires an oral test to observe the students' reactions on the humorous expression and found out if they get the humor or not (if they laugh, stay normal…ect) and unfortunately time was too short so we made only written test.

3. Pedagogical Recommendations

In addition to what has been handled in this research, those suggestions may be usefuland helpful:

➢ Learning a language means learning the culture; those two cannot be separated so students must learn them in parallel to enhance their knowledge about that foreign culture.

➢ Students are recommended to enrich their vocabulary store by reading to

develop their reading comprehension and overcome all the linguistically Issues.

➢ Students also are recommended to develop their English language skills by practicing it even in chat applications or with classmates, and trying to use methods they like and do not make them feel bored like watching movies, series...ect.

4. Suggestions for Future Researchers

For future researchers who are conducting research and studies in this field, we are suggesting that:

➢ Try to prepare kind of oral test to work on the perlocutionary section and collect moredata.

➢ You should focus more on the cultural differences.

➢ Start working early to avoid time issues.

➢ If the studying system will stay the same as now, try to put a good plan and start workingon the practical part.

Appendices

Test

Dear students, you are kindly asked to read carefully and try to explain the following expressions according to your own understanding. Your answers will help us collect data for our research.

Expression N° 01

❖ The first time I sang in the church chair; two hundred people changed their religion.

➢ …………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………
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…………………………………………………………………………
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Expression N° 02

❖ Santa Claus' helpers are known as subordinate Clauses.

➢ …………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………

Expression N°3

❖ Whoever said money cannot buy happiness did not know where to shop.

➢ …………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………
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Expression N° 04

❖ I was thinking about how people seem to read the bible a whole lot more as they get older; then it drowned on me. They are cramming for their final exam.

➢ ....
....
....

Expression N° 05

❖ Marriage is the only war which you sleep with the enemy.

➢ ....
....
....

Expression N° 06

❖ Happiness is having a large, loving, and close-knit family in another city.

➢ …………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………

Expression N° 07

❖ What kind of cake do ghosts like?

_ Eye-scream cake!

➢ ……………………………………………………………………………………

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Expression N° 08

❖ Did you hear about the guy who cut off the left side of his body?

-He is all right now.

➢ ……………………………………………………………………………………

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……………………………………………………………………………………….

Expression N° 09

❖ Do not worry about what people think. They do not do it very often.

➢ ……………………………………………………………………………………

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Expression N° 10

❖ Nice perfume. How long did you marinate in it?

➢ …………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………
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Thank you for your participation

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Investigating the Students' Difficulties in the Reading Comprehension of Humorous Expressions.

Résumé

Cette recherche tente d'étudier les difficultés de compréhension auxquelles sont confrontés les étudiants de troisièmes années d'anglais lors de la lecture d'expressions humoristiques à l'université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel. Les hypothèses de recherche supposent que les difficultés de compréhension des élèves lors de la lecture d'expression humoristiques peuvent être dues à leur incompétence sociolinguistique et interculturelle, ainsi qu'à leur manque de connaissance du vocabulaire. Les données ont été recueilles a l'aide un test donné à 50 étudiants anglais de troisième années ce test qui englobe 10 expressions humoristiques qui relèvent de différents types. Après l'analyse des données obtenues à partir du test, nous avons découvert que les étudiants sont confrontés à des difficultés culturelles en plus de leur manque de vocabulaire, de sorte qu'ils ne sont pas capables de comprendre les expressions humoristiques liées aux connaissances sociolinguistiques et culturelles. Par conséquent, il est recommandé aux étudiants d'enrichir leur vocabulaire en lisant, en développant également leurs connaissancesculturelles sur la langue étrangère.

Investigating the Students' Difficulties in the Reading Comprehension of Humorous Expressions.

الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث الى تقصي الصعوبات اللغوية التى يواجهها طلاب السنة الثالثة انجليزية في جامعة الصديق بن يحي بجيجل، تنص فرضيات البحث أن صعوبات الفهم التي يواجهها الطلاب عند قراءة العبارات الفكاهية قد تكون بسبب عدم كفاءتهم الاجتماعية و الثقافية. وكذلك ضعف رصيدهم اللغوي ، تم إجراء اختبار على 50 طالبا في السنة الثالثة لغة انجليزية لجمع البيانات يتضمن هذا الاختبار 10 تعابير لغوية والتي بدورها تنتمي إلى أنواع مختلفة تخص الفكاهة بعد تحليل البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها من الاختبار اكتشفنا أن الطلاب يواجهون صعوبات ثقافية بالإضافة إلى افتقارهم إلى الرصيد اللغوي، ونتيجة لذلك فهم غير قادرين على فهم تعابير الفكاهة والتي بدورها ترتبط بالثقافة الاجتماعية و اللغوية لذلك ينصح الطلاب بإثراء رصيدهم اللغوي من خلال القراءة و كذلك تكوين معرفتهم الثقافية حول اللغة الأجنبية المقصودة.