

Teaching Linguistic Humour Research Theories: Egyptian Higher Education EFL Literature Classes

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Abstract : "Humour studies" is an interdisciplinary research area that is relatively recent. It interests researchers from the disciplines of psychology, sociology, medicine, nursing, in the work place, gender studies, among others, and certainly teaching, language learning, linguistics, and literature. Linguistic theories of humour research are numerous; some of which are of interest to the present study. In spite of the fact that humour courses are now taught in universities around the world in the Egyptian context it is not included. The purpose of the present study is two-fold: to review the state of arts and to show how linguistic theories of humour can be possibly used as an art and craft of teaching and of learning in EFL literature classes. In the present study linguistic theories of humour were applied to selected literary texts to interpret humour as an intrinsic artistic communicative competence challenge. Humour in the area of linguistics was seen as a fifth component of communicative competence of the second language learner. In literature it was studied as satire, irony, wit, or comedy. Linguistic theories of humour now describe its linguistic structure, mechanism, function, and linguistic deviance. Semantic Script Theory of Verbal Humor (SSTH), General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), Audience Based Theory of Humor (ABTH), and their extensions and subcategories as well as the pragmatic perspective were employed in the analyses. This research analysed the linguistic semantic structure of humour, its mechanism, and how the audience reader (teacher or learner) becomes an interactive interpreter of the humour. This promotes humour competence together with the linguistic, social, cultural, and discourse communicative competence. Studying humour as part of the literary texts and the perception of its function in the work also brings its positive association in class for educational purposes. Humour is by default a provoking/laughter-generated device. Incongruity recognition, perception and resolving it, is a cognitive mastery. This cognitive process involves a humour experience that lightens up the classroom and the mind. It establishes connections necessary for the learning process. In this context the study examined selected narratives to exemplify the application of the theories. It is, therefore, recommended that the theories would be taught and applied to literary texts for a better understanding of the language. Students will then develop their language competence. Teachers in EFL/ESL classes will teach the theories, assist students apply them and interpret text and in the process will also use humour. This is thus easing students' acquisition of the second language, making the classroom an enjoyable, cheerful, self-assuring, and self-illuminating experience for both themselves and their students. It is further recommended that courses of humour research studies should become an integral part of higher education curricula in Egypt.

Keywords : ABTH, deviance, disjuncture, episodic, GTVH, humour competence, humour comprehension, humour in the classroom, humour in the literary texts, humour research linguistic theories, incongruity-resolution, isotopy-disjunction, jab line, longer text joke, narrative story line (macro-micro), punch line, six knowledge resource, SSTH, stacks, strands, teaching linguistics, teaching literature, TEFL, TESL

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