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# UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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# DEVELOPING TOUR GUIDE STUDENTS’ ABILITY TO MAKE SENSE OF HUMOUR IN ENGLISH JOKES THROUGH AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

# *Phát triển khả năng hiểu tính hài hước trong các truyện cười tiếng Anh của sinh viên nghành hướng dẫn du lịch qua tài liệu nguyên gốc*

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# INTRODUCTION

**1. Rationale**

Humour is an essential element in our life and having a sense of humour nearly means enjoying life. Funny people may make a good impression on others by reducing social distance during interactions perhaps conveying greater social warmth, individuals who have a sense of humour may also gain health benefits, and humour acting as an important mechanism for life's tribulations, decreasing stress and improving performance at workplace (Provine, 2000; McGhee, 2002; Moran et al, 2014).

The benefits of humour at a workplace are that the happy environment of working will make employees to be more loyal and productive. Tactful jokes may create healthy working environment increasing people’s liking and going to work. This is true with some previous studies that people who have fun on the job are more creative, more productive, better decision-makers, and get along better with co-workers. Therefore, in the field of tourism, humour is necessary, especially in the job of tour guides where humour is inevitably delivered and appreciated, the relationship is accordingly improved and there comes a nice trip (Howard, Twitches & Smith, 2001; Woodside, 2007; Anderson, 2007; Pearce and Pabel, 2015).

However, reality shows that Vietnamese tour guides (TG) can use little humouror English jokes when communicating with foreign tourists (FT) who speak English. They did not have any lessons of making sense ofhumour or telling jokes in English at college or university. Actually, for Vietnamese TGs who can speak English well, it is difficult to understand or tell English jokes even though they have some sense of humour (Wulf, 2010). Vega (1989: 26) indicates that "even highly proficient second language (L2) speakers seem to systematically fail in the interpretation and production of humour."

Actually, it is not usually facile for Vietnamese learners of English as their foreign language (EFL) to appreciate English humour let alone producing it because they are not to be absolutely competent at humour and humour mechanism (Raskin, 1975, Attardo, 1994; Ritchie, 2004). They have to achieve humour competence involving linguistic competence and socio-culture (Hay, 2001), knowledge of textual conventions (Haliday and Hassan, 1976), conventional rules (van Dijk, 1977), and pragmatic competence (Bachman, 1990). Thus, in order to understand the English speaking jokers, an L2 learner has to be equipped with such knowledge to interpret L2 humorous utterances.

# 2. Significance of the study

This study makes contributions to:

(1) As a contribution to the applied linguistics literature, the research provides the ways in which pragmatic competence promotes the capacity of making sense ofhumour (MSOH) in English jokes for Vietnamese TG students.

            (2) As a contribution to the EFL teaching and learning methodologies, this study discovers the extent to which authentic materials (AM) can help develop TG students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes in the light of the theories of humour, pragmatic competence (PC) and humour competence (HC).

(3) This study also provides a case of using mixed methods as a contribution to the literature of research methodologies for applied linguistic studies.

(4) The findings of this study contribute to the process of promoting a workforce of professional tour guides for KhanhHoa province who not only have a good sense of L2 humour but also can use it in communication via English with foreign tourists visiting the province.

(5) This study brings benefits to EFL students in improving their communicative competence by raising their awareness of the importance of understanding English jokes and providing them with strategies and methods to enhance their ability to interpret humour in English jokes.

(6) The results of the study are beneficial to English language instructors in introducing English jokes into their English language classroom, providing them with methods of integrating teaching humour in English jokes into other syllabi such as the language one and cross-cultural one, designing authenticity into the teaching materials and adapting authentic materials to suit their students’ need in making sense of English humor. A practical source of English jokes with a guide for teachers is also supplied as a reference for teaching and learning humour in English jokes. This is a new contribution of the present study as an evidence to confirm the fact that humour can be trained.

(7) Personally, the study has enriched the researcher profoundly in terms of humour competencies such that she has gradually developed into a more cheerful personality. Her knowledge of humour theories has enabled her to perceive the humorous subtleties not only in the English language but also in the Vietnamese language, her mother tongue.  This, in turns, grows her love of the two languages intensively.

**3. Research aims and objectives**

The ultimate aims of the study are:

(1) To identify appropriate English authentic materials that can introduce English jokes into English language classes for tour guide students at a university in Vietnam.

(2) To explore the extent to which the use of these authentic materials help to develop the students' ability to understand and interpret the humour embedded in English jokes.

The objectives of the study are:

(1) To investigate the opinions and needs of tour guides, tour guide students, teachers and tourists about learning humour in English jokes via authentic materials and

(2) To pinpoint and select the authentic materials appropriate for the pilot course on making sense of humour in English jokes as an intervention.

(3) To probe the internal and external difficulties that tour guide students encounter in understanding and interpreting humour in English jokes in the suggested authentic materials.

(4) To acquaint them with humour in English jokes, an approach to develop illocutionary and socio-cultural awareness in using humour in tour guiding practice job.

(5) To formulate methods/ strategies to help develop students' ability in making sense of humour in English jokes through authentic materials alongside the instructional aim of developing students’ communicative competence.

(6) To gauge the students' ability to make sense of humour before and after taking the intervention course as evidence of the intervention effectiveness.

# 4. Scope of the study

The target population comprises the students whose major is English for tourism and whose future professional jobs weretour guides, foreign tourists, teachers of English for tourism in NhaTrang City and KhanhHoa University’s college undergraduates. Verbal humour was studied for proposed authentic materials. The focus of the study is on making sense of humour in English jokes, but not just on humour comprehension and interpretation.

**5. Research questions**

The research questions that the present study sought to answer are as follows.

1. What kind of authentic materials are appropriate to help develop KhanhHoa University tour guide students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes (covering objectives 1, 2, 3)?
2. To what extent do the authentic materials enhance the ability of making sense of humour in English jokes for the tour guide students (covering objectives 1, 2, 3)?

# 6. Study componential framework

The framework consists of two main phases:

* Phase 1: A preliminary study was conducted with two stages which are Stage 1 – Needs analysis and Difficulties categorization; Stage 2 – proposed authentic materials verification. The findings from Phase 1 address Research question 1.
* Phase 2: An intervention - Explicit instruction. The findings from Phase 2 address Research question 2.

# 7. Structure of the study

The thesis is divided into three parts and three chapters. Introduction is the first part for the background, the development of the study which consists of three chapters and conclusion s summaries the study.

# CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the theoretical background for the present study. The main sections consist of a brief introduction of humour, relevant issues of humour in English jokes including the definition of canned jokes, mechanism of humor and ambiguity of humour. An interface of Hay’s humour competence, Bloom’s taxonomy and Bachman’s pragmatic competence is made for developing the ability to make sense of humour in English jokes. The approaches of using authentic materials to teaching humour competence are mentioned in this chapter. The final part of is a review of the previous studies concerning the research issues of the present study.

**1.1. Introducing the topic of humour**

## 1.1.1. Definitions of humour

## Oxford Advanced Learner’s Encyclopedic defines humour as the (i) “quality of being amusing or comic”; and (ii) “ability to appreciate things, situations or people that are comic, ability to be amused” (1992: 442). Researchers have different definitions on humour. In general, humour is a broad term referring to a comic value of an object, a situation, a feeling and verbalizing in scripts in the form of textual humour (Shardakova, 2016). The present study focuses on verbal humour in term of opposite script theory (Raskin, 1985; Attado, 1994).

## 1.1.2. Sense of humour

Sense of humour (SOH) is a person’s ability to perceive humour (Chapman, 2007) and rather than that, SOH is a personality trait to refer to one's "humour-related behaviour"(Nicolson, 1946). Moreover, SOS is with reference to both humour humour appreciation (HA) and humour performance (HP). When a person is said to have sense of humour, he firstly can laugh at things he finds to be funny, laugh a great deal and easily to be amused, and secondly he can tell funny stories and amuse other people (Eysenk, 1972). However, not all people have SOH always laugh at humour and vice versa, a person who has little SOH can appreciate and laugh at a comic because SOH is mostly in favour of in-born (Eysenk, 1972)but humour lies in one’s mind and has cognitive function(Chapman, 2007).

## 1.1.3. Verbal humour

Verbal humour (VB) is firstly defined as a *joke-carrying text* while non-verbal humour (NVH) is a humorous situation not created, described or expressed by any text (Suls, 1983; Raskin, 1985; Alexander, 1997; Norrick , 2004). The present study supports “verbal humour” which is “connected to words and their use” for its origin from the Latin word “verbum” meaning “a word” (Dynel, 2009).Styles indicate the ways to express humour (Martin et al., 2003; Stieger, Formann and Burger, 2011; Gignac, Karatamoglu, Wee and Palacious, 2014). There are two groups of styles with four names as affiliative, self-enhancing, self-defeating and aggressive. Affiliative and self-enhancingregulate emotions and cheerful outlook on life. By contrast, aggressive andself-defeating humourinvolves the use of humor for demeaning or manipulating others, as in sarcasm, teasing, or ridicule such as racist jokes, sarcasm and disparagement of individuals and an implicit feeling of negativity. Types mean the form or message of humour. Types of humour are varied and overlapped in naming. Different researchers provide different studies and suggest different names. Upon such views, the humour styles and types are summarized and those in the present study are delimited to the ones of affiliative and self-enhancing of verbal humour.

## 1.1.4. Theories of humour

Humours come from the three theories: superiority, incongruity and relief (Raskin, 1985) which are categorized into three paradigms: psychoanalytical, cognitive and social, respectively (Attardo, 1994). Superiority accentuates the negative attitude of the producer or the user of humour towards the humour target and the often alleged aggressive character of laughter. It reflects one’s superiority over the others and laughter is aimed at the misfortunes of others (McGhee, 1979; Morrell, 1983; Ross, 1998).Incongruity theory refers to the cause of humour effect of verbal humour. The incongruity exists between what an individual expects and what actually occurs (Raskin, 1985).Incongruity is the cause of humour and men perceive it to laugh (Forabosco, 1992; Ruch, 1993, Bachman, 2007).Relief focuses mainly on the recipient of humour that laughter provides relief to various tensions and allows repressed desires to be satisfied (Emirad, 1996). “Most jokes provoke laughter by building up a tension which is then suddenly and unexpectedly exploded” (Lozen, 1996:153).

## 1.2. Humour in English jokes

## 1.2.1. Definitionof canned joke

## “A joke is a humorous short text repeated (almost) verbatim whose content is usually irrelevant to, and dissociated from, the conversation and is geared towards amusement” (Dynel, 2009: 11).

Canned joke has a punch line, but it is not always to recognize all the punch lines in jokes. Thus, jokes used in this present study are written in the English language for English-speaking people and learners of English as L2/FL.

## 1.2.2. Characteristics of humour in English jokes

First, Jokes are related with words, sentences, texts and discourse (Ritchie, 2004). But the oddity of the joke is that it sometimes goes beyond the conventional labeling needed for purely linguistic purposes. Second, a peculiar element of contrast is symbol of the joke, a *playful judgment* (Fischer, 1889, cited in Freud, 1960) which is merely a force to help produce a comic contrast between the meaning and meaninglessness of the words (Lipps, 1898). Third, implicit plays an important role in jokes. Some part of information is left implicit in jokes and the punch line appears by the end of the joke and causes a surprise, a. misunderstanding, implicature, etc (Grice, 1975; Attardo, 1990). In addition, jokes often tend to target at some communities (Davies, 2011).

## 1.2.3. Mechanism of humour - The Incongruity-resolution

Incongruity is the core of all humor experiences. It contains something unexpected, out of context, inappropriate, unreasonable, illogical, exaggerated, and so forth and serves as the basic vehicle for the humor (Wu, 2013). The humorous effect or laughter-eliciting mechanism can be summarized in according with the three phases: (i) joke contains incongruity; (ii) the incongruity is solved; and (iii) pleasure arises along with the release of tension built up during the preceding intellectual effort (Wu, ibid). Suls (1972, 1977, 1983)'s model is the most important theory in stressing the role of incongruity and resolution in the generation of humorous effect. It consists of two stages in which the key of humour lies in the initial one in which an incongruity is detected by the hearer. Based on the scope of the present study, linguistic structure level is reduced to incongruous discourse and encompasses phono-morphology, syntax, and semantics-pragmatics.

# 1.3. Making sense of humour in English jokes

## 1.3.1. Concepts of making sense of humour in English jokes

According to dictionary of Colin (2016 by HarperCollins Publisher), the expression of “make sense of” has its synonyms as “understanding”, “appreciating” and “comprehending”. Then expression “*making sense of humour in English jokes*” entails both the meaning of understanding and comprehending or leads to appreciating the humour incorporated in English jokes.Thus the ability to make sense of humour in English jokes means a competence of grasping or interpreting the nature and the meaning of humour in English jokes or appreciating it. However, the aim of tour guide students to understand and appreciate humour is served for their future professional career. Thus“*developing the ability to make sense of humour in English joke*” is to help enhance tour guide students’ professional competence that when they comprehend and appreciate the humour in English jokes, they can tell jokes to foreign tourists in their tour-guiding job in the future.

## 1.3.2. Concepts of humour comprehension and humour appreciation

Humor comprehension is described as the ability to perceive relationships or ideas in incongruous ways, whereas humor appreciation is defined as the ability to understand and get pleasure from humorous messages (Ziv, 1984).Raskin (1985) asserts that ability to interpret a joke is dependent upon the ease with which one can switch between bona-fide communication and non-bona-fide communication.

## 1.3.3. Humour competence and pragmatic competence

## In order to be able to make sense of humour in English jokes, a person has to have humour competence because “the humor competence would allow a given speaker to recognize humor, just like a native speaker could recognize a grammatical sentence, without being able to explain why it was grammatical” (Attardo, 2008). Humour competence (HC) is “the ability of native speaker to pass judgments as to the funniness of a text” (Raskin, 1985: 51) indicating a cognitive mechanism to drive the audience to interpret the two opposite-script structure. Thus humour comprehension is related to interpretation and humour appreciation is related to laughter, while humour competence is a requirement for humour comprehension and appreciation. This is the main interest of the present study: L2 tour guide students need humour competence so that they can interpret and appreciate it.

Hay (2001) has proposed a similar point when discussing humour support strategies. She mentions qualified and unqualified humour support, of which the latter involves a scalar implicature (where “implicature” is taken to mean communicative implication). The three implicatures are ***1. Recognition****,* ***2. Understanding****,*and ***3. Appreciation*** (2001: 67). **Agreement**is a third element to narrow the gap between understanding and appreciation. That means when joke audience agrees with and the content of the joke, they can appreciate it (Hay, 2001).

In addition, the process of humour competence is close to Bloom’s taxonomy, which provides an important framework for teachers to use and focus on higher order thinking in the language learning, teaching and assessing humour competence. Among the six levels of the taxonomy, the application can be viewed in five for the process of appreciating humour as (i) Remembering, (ii) Understanding, (iii) Applying, (iv) Analysing and (v) Evaluating (Anderson, 2001).

Bachman's (1990) and later Bachman and Palmer's (1996) propose an overarching model, named "*Communicative language ability*" consisting of both the knowledge or competence and the capacity for implementing, or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use" Bachman’ model entails two major dimensions: *organizational competence* and *pragmatic competence* (Bachman, 1990: 84-87). Organizational competence consists of grammatical competence and textual competence and pragmatic competence encompasses two main abilities of illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence.

# 1.4. Authentic materials for developing FL students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes

## 1.4.1. Using authentic materials in developing humour competence

## The materials which are used for developing tour guide students’ ability to make sense of humour must be sure of authenticity in the cases of text, task and learners. Four types of authencity are taken into consideration: authenticity of text, authenticity of learners, authenticity of the tasks, authenticity of the classroom (Breen, 1985: 67). The criteria for selecting authentic materials are suitability, exploitability and readability.

## 1.4.2. Competency-based approach to authentic materials

## Competency-based approach (CBE) is advisable for the authentic materials in the case of developing humour competence for tour guide students. The nature of developing the ability to make sense of humour in English jokes for tour guide students is to serve their workplace skills. Hence, the process of teaching humour for developing the ability to make sense of humour for tour guide students through authentic materials should comprise two steps as follows.

## Step 1: Comprehending and interpreting the humour in English jokes

Step 2: Analyzing the humorous situations, combining with tour guiding targets and telling jokes

**1.4.5. Needs for learning L2 humour through authentic materials**

Needs are to be analyzed and discovered for collecting authentic English jokes for the materials. The most guideline when claiming the needs analysis consists of two aspects namely target situation needs and learning needs (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).Target needs refer to "what the learner needs to do in the target situation" and "learning needs refer to what the learner needs to do in order to learn" (Hutchinson and Waters: 1987:54).

# 1.5. Studies on humour competence and humour appreciation

## 1.5.1. Previous studies in other countries

There have been many studies on humour competence and humour appreciation. Souza (2008) made a study on the use of jokes and riddles as tools for EFL learning and culture by observing the students’ reactions to the presentation of jokes at the language Centre in the College of Education at the University of Sao Paolo. Li and Chen (2006) did research on detecting EFL college learner’s perception of ambiguity on joke comprehension with an experiment on female and male students who did the joke tests categorized in linguistic jokes and cultural jokes. Welo (2009) investigated the problems of understanding jokes in the English language and explored about the advantages of English jokes to improve reading comprehension for Thai Students. Alvaro (2011) focused on the pragmatic analysis of humour by using cinema with a concrete movie of Woody Allen's Anything Else. Wulf (2010) proposed a humour curriculum based on a taxonomy of microskills directly drawn from Morain (1991) and Attardo, Hempelmann and diMaio (2002) and Schmitz (2002). Wulf (2010) also suggested a sample activity of teaching telling jokes and collaboratively discussing their meaning in class. Petkova (2013) did a study on documenting the effect and perceptions of this curriculum in an intensive English program in southern California and also investigating the perceptions of second language learners of English about humour in their native language as compared to perceptions about humour in English. Especially, Hodson (2014) in Japan, based on the idea that humour competence can be defined as the capacity to recognize and understand humour and is an important aspect of semantic and pragmatic competence for advanced language learners, had a study about design, implementation, and outcomes of a one-semester programme in humour competence for university EFL students.. It is notable that Hudson (2014) used counts and journals effectively. The students could appreciate humour and present jokes. These are taken as lessons for the present study with the students in Vietnam’s context.

## 1.5.2. Review of previous studies in Viet Nam

In Viet Nam, humour and English jokes has been accepted and used by many teachers in the English classroom.There are some articles mainly on the internet speaking about the way to use humour in the English language classroom. However, very few studies have been done on the use of humour in classroom or humour comprehension and appreciation. It is sure to say that Vietnamese studies on humour just began at the beginning of the 2000s.

# 1.6. Chapter conclusion and theoretical framework

This chapter has presented the review of the literature about an introduction of the topic of humour, humour in English jokes, making sense of humour in English jokes, authentic materials for making sense of humour in English jokes and review of relevant previous studies to provide the theoretical background for the present study as presented in Figure 1.1.

*Figure 1.1.* Theoretical framework for developing tour guide students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes

The appreciation of humour in canned English jokes which contain the characteristics of verbal humour, theories of humour, mechanism of humour, sematic and pragmatic perspectives is the top of the framework. Humour competence is considered as a means to convey necessary elements such as linguistic competence and cultural competence to help develop the ability to appreciate humour in English can jokes. This part is made up of Hay’s humour competence model, Bloom’s taxonomy and Bachman’s pragmatic competence. Regarding teaching humour competence, a kind of proposed authentic materials works as an intervention with authentic English humorous texts and methods of teaching. This is the core part of the theoretical framework for the enhancement of tour guide students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes. The proposed materials would be built on the basis of the criteria for authentic text selection in which there is Fabel’s humour themes for tourism and semantic and pragmatic ambiguities as the grounding. The proposed materials are selected on the guideline of competency-based approach (Richards, 2006). Fabel’s themes of humour would be applied for discovering the factual humour themes used in Viet Nam’s tourism context. Accordingly, the tour guide students’ ability is expressed through both humour competence and performance.

# CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology of the present study. The chapter begins with the research context and design, then research questions and then presentation of the two phases of the research with data collection and analysis in each stage.

# 2.1. Introduction

This part introduces the research context and research design to provide the background for the methodology of the present study.

## 2.1.1. Research context

The present study involved different subjects. In the in the preliminary study,the participants included tour guides (TG), foreign tourists (IT) who speaks English, teachers of English for Tourism (TET) and tour guide undergraduate students (TGUS). In the intervention, the implementation of the proposed materials was done with the tour guide undergraduates students at Khanh Hoa University as they are.

Khanh Hoa University stemming from two colleges: NhaTrang Teacher’s Training College and Nha Trang College of Art, Culture and Tourism and was upgraded to the status of a university on 1/8/2016 following the Government decision. The Faculty of Foreign Language in the university provides a cohort of tour guide (TG) graduates whose major is English for the workplace every year. According to Regulations on Foreign Language Skills for International Tour Guides ratified by the Minister of Sport, Culture and Tourism in Decision No. 1417/QD-BVHTTDL on 14 April 2009, one of the specialized skills in communication is that international tour guides have to be able to tell jokes and quizzes in English.

However, up to now, in Vietnam, there have not been any particular programs or syllabus to help the tour guide students to develop their ability to make sense of humour in English jokes. Thus, it is urgently needed to enhance the ability to make sense of humour in English jokes for the TG students at Khanh Hoa University to strengthen their professional capacity in accordance with the requirement of the job at today workplace. The current study is a timely attempt to meet that need.

## 2.1.2. Research questions

The research questions that the present study sought to answer are as follows.

(1)What kind of authentic English materials are appropriate to help develop Khanh Hoa University tour guide students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes?

(2)To what extent do the authentic materials enhance the ability of making sense of humour in English jokes for the tour guide students?

To address the research questions, the present study employed a mixed methods design with two main phases: Phase one is the preliminary study and phase two is the intervention. Following is the description of the research design.

**2.1.3. Research design**

Following Creswell’s (2011) guideline, the present study employed a sequential explanatory mixed methods design which involved the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The priority was given to the quantitative data and the analyses were integrated during the interpretation phase of the study. The present study consisted of two phases: the preliminary study for needs analysis (NA) to select a kind of authentic materials and the piloting study as an intervention for finding the outcomes.

In Phase 1, which is a preliminary study for answering research question 1 consists of needs analysis, problem identification and materials verification.It was designed to collect perceptions, attitudes and opinions regarding the utility of humour English from real tour guides with international tour guiding missions, humour preference from the international tourists, intention of teaching humour from teachers of English for tourism and humour comprehension from tour guide students for a kind of authentic materials. data collection approaches: qualitative and quantitative.

Phase 2, which is the intervention for answering research question 2, used this design for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. This phase of the study addressed the extent of the effectiveness of the proposed materials used in the intervention. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used, and it involved collecting quantitative data first and then explaining the quantitative results with in-depth qualitative data. In this exploratory follow-up, the plan was to explore the rate of humour comprehension and appreciation of TG undergraduates before and after the intervention to cross check with the pre/post-tests.

The qualitative data results were attribute to the qualitative data and the two kinds of data were incorporated. Mixed methods research was suitably employed when the researcher wanted to validate the findings obtained from other methods or wants to continuously regard a research question from different angles to discover potential contradictions.

##### Table 2.1. Summary of information and data gathered procedure

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Research question** | **Research stage** | **Time** | **Source of information** | **Instrument of data collection** | **Type of gathered data** |
| 1. What kind of authentic materials are appropriate to help develop KhanhHoa University tour guide students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes? | Needs analysis | July to October 2014 | Tour guides  Tourists  Lecturers  Undergraduates  Employers | Survey questionnaire | Quantitative |
| October and November 2014 | Tour guides  Tourists  Undergraduates | Interview | Qualitative |
| December 2014 | Tour guides  Tourists | Observation | Qualitative |
| Problem specification | March 2015 | Undergraduates | Interview | Qualitative |
| Material verification and piloting | May 2015 | Lecturers  Undergraduates | Survey questionnaire  Interview | Quantitative  Qualitative |
| 2. To what extent do the authentic materials enhance the ability of making sense of humour in English jokes for the tour guide students? | Pre-intervention evaluation | August 2016 | Undergraduates | Pre-test | Quantitative |
| Post-intervention evaluation | September 2016 | Undergraduates | Post-test | Quantitative |
| October 2016 | Undergraduates | Interview | Qualitative |

# 2.2. Phase 1 - Preliminary study

The first phase of the present study aims at answering the first research question:*What kind of authentic materials are appropriate to help develop Khanh Hoa University tour guide students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes?*

This phase consist of two stages which are Needs Analysis (NA) and Materials Verification (MV). Each stage is summarized with specific description regarding its participants and sampling, data collection instruments and procedure, and data analysis.

## 2.2.1. Stage 1 - Needs analysis

To serve the purpose of the NA, four groups of participants were recruited: tour guides (TG), foreign tourists (FT), teachers of English for tourism (TEFT), tour guide students (TGS) to provide a broad picture of needs in learning English jokes and humour for tour guide undergraduates. Survey questionnaire, interview and observation were conducted for NA – the first stage of the research to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Audio recorder was used to record the interviews and observations. The data collected and analyzed for NA involved both quantitative from questionnaires and qualitative from interviews and observations. Firstly, quantitative data were collected from 184 questionnaires from the four groups of stakeholders and analyzed by SPSS software version 24for descriptive statistics reported in graphs and figures. Secondly, qualitative data were gathered through the interviews and observation and coded into groups and themes. After that both types of data were merged for answers to the two research questions.

## 2.2.2. Stage 2 - Materials verification and piloting

The authentic materials were selected upon the major findings of the NA and were put into verification for use in the intervention. The participants who were invited to the evaluation were three teachers, two tour guides and two foreign tourists (one Englishman and one American) who took part in the survey questionnaire and the semi-structured interview in the NA.In parallel with the verification of the proposed materials, a pilot course using the material was offered.

# 2.3. Phase 2: Intervention

# The intervention in the present study aimed at answering the second research questions: *To what extent do the authentic materials enhance the ability of making sense of humour in English jokes for the tour guide students?* The problems of TG undergraduates were identified in the NA and the proposed authentic materials were used as a means to solve the problems.

# Participants were the ones non-randomly selected taking the course as a treatment group. This non-random selection was sampled to ensure adequate representation in the final sample. The quantity of sample comprising 20 students in fact according to the statistics could not represent for a whole number of the students who were TG undergraduates at Khanh Hoa University. However, in this study, the participants were used as a sample for the course for a comparison of their level of humour appreciation before and after the treatment.

# A joke-telling contest was organized with the participation of the TGUs who had experienced the course.

# Interview was conducted to clarify the results of the post-test. The participants were interviewed in order to capture their comprehension of the English jokes they read in the post-test and at the same time their feelings and opinions about the materials, and were asked if they considered the class had helped them understand the humor in English jokes or if it had allowed them to learn foreign culture in the target language or culture. The interviews were done the week after classes had ended.

# The descriptive data from the questionnaires were reported in frequency distribution, percentages of responses and means. Responses were analysed, interpreted and described. Humour interpretation was investigated in respondents belonging to the different items in the questionnaire. Thus, the t-test (two tailed) was used to determine differences if there were two sections (for example: after and before).

# 2.4. Significance of quantitative data and qualitative data integration

# A two-phase sequential design provided data to be collected first and used statistical analysis to determine which findings to augment in the next phase. The data were accordingly characterized of both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data were measurably formulated from facts and uncovered the phenomenon of the needs of learning English jokes with comprehensive paper surveys conducted. In parallel, qualitative data were rallied from individual interviews to provide confirmation for the results. These two phases occur through the research procedure of the study.

## 2.4.1. Validity

## Validity was seen as the soundness and cogency of the data. In other words, the qualitative data were to be honest, deep and rich and the scope of the data was achieved.

## 2.4.2. Reliability

## The present study is in favour of fidelity to real life, context and situation specificity, authenticity, comprehensiveness, detail, honesty, depth of response and meaningfulness to the respondents.

# 2.5. Chapter conclusion

# This chapter has described the whole methodology of the present study. With the objective to develop tour guide students' ability to make sense of humour in English jokes through authentic materials, the present study was done on the basis of sequential explanatory mixed methods design. It encompassed two phases: (1) surveys to analyze needs, selecting jokes and proposing authentic humorous materials and specifying problems for treatment; and (2) an intervention within a pre-posttest experiment to assess the effectiveness of the treatment.

# CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the data analysis, results and discussions from the respondents of the two phases: (1) surveys to analyze needs, selecting jokes and proposing authentic humorous materials and specifying problems for treatment; and (2) an intervention within a pre-posttest experiment to assess the effectiveness of the treatment.

## 3.1. Phase 1 - Summary of results

This first phase of the present study, consisting of two stages, namely Needs Analysis (NA) and Material Verification (MV) and piloting, answers the first research question: *What kind of authentic materials are appropriate to help develop Khanh Hoa University tour guide students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes?*

**(1) Needs analysis**

It can come to a decision on a collection of the English jokes for the authentic materials. The jokes were short, funny and understandable. They must be canned jokes which consist of a set-up and a punch line. The types of jokes were linguistic-based, cultural and reality-basedones. Topics of the jokes were various but supportive for tourists and students. The needs of learning and criteria for collecting English jokes can be summarized in Table 3.1.

## (2) The Proposed Authentic Materials

The followings are the main elements of the proposed set of materials: the aims and objectives, the syllabus and the proposed materials.

* **Aims**

(i) To familiarise TGUs with different types of English jokes that they may use in their future tour guiding job;

(ii) To enhance TGUs’ awareness of differing cultures through English jokes.

* **Objectives** After learning with the proposed materials, TGUs will

(i) Be able to remember, understand and interpret humour in the jokes representing the three main types of English jokes namely linguistic, cultural and reality-based jokes that could amuse English speaking tourists;

(ii) Be able to appropriately retell these types of English jokes to amuse people from different cultural backgrounds.

* **Syllabus** (Table 3.1).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Units** | **Aims and Objectives** | **Humorous Language focus** | **Tasks** | **Activities** | **Cultural Awareness** |
| Unit 1: What is the joke? | - Aim: Getting the joke.  - Objective: be able to to use verbal language fluently. | - Opposite scripts  - Humour ambiguity: linguistics, culture and reality.  - Punch line | - Exchanging opinions.  - Cracking jokes in groups.  - Rearranging funny stories. | - Listening to jokes.  - Describing cartoons.  - Listening to  funny stories. | Vietnamese folk tales  and humorous culture |
| Unit 2: What kind of flower do you have between your nose and your mouth? | - Aim: Getting the joke.  - Objective:be able to use verbal language fluently. | Puns  Homophone  Homonyme  Polysemy | - Matching:  Minimal pairs  - Role play  - Joking in groups | - Listening to  Minimal pairs.  - Telling  Knock-knock game jokes.  - Playing puns in the English phonetics. | Humour of Asian cultures |
| Unit 2: The well and the sick | - Aim: Comprehending jokes  - Objective: Be able to discover and use the resolution of the incongruity | Lexis  Syntax  Semantics | - Listening for comprehension  - Joking in groups  - Take-turning  - Asking and answering | - Listening to  Riddles  - Telling Riddles,  One-and-  two liners,  Short stories | Jewish jokes  Irish jokes  Australian humour |
| Unit 3: Mother’s Day | - Aim: Appreciating jokes.  - Objective: Be able to use verbal language and non-verbal language in humour performance. | Cultural jokes | - Jigsaw  - Role play  - Problem-solving  - Decision making | - Listening to  Cultural jokes.  - Telling funny stories. | English and American humour |
| Unit 4: I’d like a hamburger and a milkshake, please. | - Aim: Comprehending jokes.  - Objective: Be able to integrate into cultural humorous groups | Reality-based jokes | - Listening for comprehension  - Questions and answers  - Information Gap  Problem-solving  Discussion | - Listening to  anecdotes  - Telling anecdotes and  funny stories | Why women aren't funny |
| Unit 5: Abscentmindedness | - Aim: Reciting jokes  - Objective: Be able to interpret a humorous text fluently to the right audience at appropriate time and place | Short funny stories | - Matching - Completing stories  - Cloze tests  - Role play  - Problem-solving  - Decision making | - Telling and hearing funny stories | Reality diversity and cultural shocks: the blond, the monk, the black, the mother-in-law, the region |

##### *Table 3.1: The proposed syllabus*

* **Timing**

Each unit takes 2 hours and a half (60m/h) which is similar to 3 periods. Each period lasts 50 minutes, which is the current time duration for credit time learning (MoET, 2007). Thus the whole time is 15 periods which is similar to one credit.

# 3.2. Phase two –Summary of results

This second phase of the present study named intervention (Refer to Figure 2.2) answers the second research question: *To what extent do the authentic materials enhance the ability of making sense of humour in English jokes for the tour guide students?*

## (1) Pre-post tests of humour interpretation in English joke

## Ambiguities of the English jokes were recognized and understood by TGU students. The subjects’ responses were remarkably significant in the posttest (T1) compared to that in the pretest (T2). Regarding the mean score of overall performance of learners, the result after the treatment was much greater than that before the treatment. The value of mean indicates that the difference between pretest (T1) and posttest (T2) was significant in statistics for all the jokes with the value of 7.3750 in T2 compared with the mean value of 2.3000 in T1 and that the treatment was effective with such great progress. Therefore, it can be seen that most of the subjects could interpret the humour in the twelve English jokes in T2.

## In terms of linguistic jokes, the subcategories of phonological and syntactical ambiguities were better comprehended than morphological and lexical ones. The result of the mean of each joke in T1 and T2 after the treatment was much greater than that before the treatment. The t-test result determined that there was significance in statistics in the difference between T1 and T2 for all the jokes with all the p values of lower than 0.05 and that the progress was made by the treatment. Regarding the mean score of performance of each subcategory, joke 1 and 5 containing lexical ambiguities obtained a mean score of .225 and .050 on the joke test in T1, while in T2 a mean score of .600 (t=-3.943, p=.001 <.05) and .800 (t=-6.850, p=.000 < .05) respectively. T-test indicates that in T2 the subjects performed better than in T1 and the value is significant. Similarly, joke 4 of phonology and joke 10 of syntax whose T-test values indicate a remarkable difference in the subjects’ performance with a mean score of .250 and .050 on the joke test in T1, while in T2 a mean score of .800 (t=-3.943, p=.001 <.05) and .700 (t=-6.850, p=.000 < .05) respectively. However, T-test of joke 4 which composes of morphological ambiguity is not as perfectly valuable as the above performed by joke 1, 4 and 10 though there is a good mean score of .050 on the joke test in T1 and .375 in T2 (t=-3.322, p=.004 <.05). The results indicate that the ambiguities in the English linguistic jokes such as lexical, phonological and syntactic ones were better clarified and easier to comprehend than morphological one in this humorous language activity.

## Cultural jokes consist of jokes 6, 7, 8, 9 which carry the ambiguity of culture. The significant value of T-test in term of statistics indicates a remarkable difference in the subjects’ performance of cultural ambiguity with a mean score of .250, .350 and .125 in T1, while in T2 a mean score of .575 (t=-3.577, p=.002 <.05), 0.850 (t=-5.627, p=.000 < .05) and .600 (t=-6.190, p=.000 < .05) respectively. However, for joke 9 which also has the ambiguity of culture, though the value of T-test says that the performance of the subjects reached a rather significant different in statistics with t = -2.101 and p = .049, but the value of mean was quite low as .025 in T1 and .200 in T2. It is very similar with the number of subjects who could interpret this joke was 10% or only 2 subjects did. It can be sure that cultural jokes at the elementary with the context of L2/FL did not affect much the understanding English jokes. Cultural contexts in English jokes at the elementary level did not affect the subjects’ interpretation, but it was the variety of the cultural ambiguities that make difficult for TGU students to make sense of the humour in English jokes.

## Reality-based jokes consisting of jokes 3, 11 and 12 contained pragmatic ambiguities. Regarding the mean score of overall performance of learners, the subjects obtained mean scores on the jokes ranged very significantly in statistics as in Table . They got .800 (t=-5.141, p=.000 < .05) on joke 3 in T2, .700 (t=-4873, p=.000) on joke 11 in T2 and .700 (t=-3.684, p=002 < .05) on joke 12 in T2 compared to the mean scores of .400, .200 and .350 respectively in T1. T-test indicates that there was significant difference and that the subjects performed well and regularly on the jokes with pragmatic ambiguities.

## (2) Pre-post test about difficulties

## It is clear that there has been a significant reduction in the level of difficulties: ambiguity, meaning of words, structure, word pronunciation, culture, length and context of the jokes in the tests (T1) and (T2). As for the difficulty in interpreting the ambiguities, over 90% of participants found linguistic jokes difficult or very difficult initially but this has been reduced to 40% after the intervention.

## (3)Results of test of performing jokes

## The contest showed significant results. There were six TGUs fell in the range of funny and very funny in the fun degree and good and very good in the quality degree. These six students at first before the course did not know anything about English jokes and humour and even found it difficult to understand them, but later at that time they could tell good jokes and the audience laughed happily when hearing their jokes.

## 3.2.4. Results of questionnaire about attitudes towards the authentic materials

## The percentages for happy are higher than very happy, apart from videos, reinforcing the feeling that visual humor is easier to comprehend. The scores for happy are all over 60% for the three groupings that recorded lower scores for very happy, so these categories still record an overall happy response. Only four groupings were classified as a little happy, with just one of these recording a percentage over 5%; telling jokes with friends at 15%. None of the groups recorded an answer for not happy so there is clearly a positive attitude overall.

# 3.3. Discussion

## 3.3.1. Application of the authentic materials: benefits and challenges

In terms of benefits, first of all, there is one very important issue that must be considered when discussing the authentic materials, namely the way in which the jokes were written by the English people for English people and the ones were actually used in classroom context. One more important thing was that joking with foreign tourists, TGU students had to join in the group and found the identity. When it came to the advantages of using authentic materials, findings released that they were significant both from the obvious pedagogical perspective, and from a psychological one, as they helped students become more confident, once they realized that they could “survive” in a real cultures of the target humorous language. They were more assured and satisfied with learning comprehending, appreciating and reciting English jokes.

One other advantage worth considering is that authentic materials help students kept up with the “living” language of humour. Genuine materials presented the TGU students to text types and language styles, which they will not normally come across in textbooks, helping them acquire more complex knowledge of the language in humour. Moreover, authentic materials were selected under the competency-based approach, so they exposed the TGU students to a very large range of activities that were acceptable for developing tour guides’ capacity of tour guiding such as the skills of telling jokes and amusing people with jokes and joking. Last, but not least, these materials may prove to have an intrinsic educational value (Harmer,1983) as they help the students be informed and learn more about that particular culture. More than 90% of the students felt happy when the authentic materials were used in the classroom. This is a success of the proposed materials.

## 3.3.2. Application of humour competence model

The achievement of the present study is that it has proved the ability to make sense of humour in English jokes can be developed for tour guide students. The data in the pretest shows that the number of students who could appreciate jokes was very low. But after learning, there was a dramatic change in posttest results. The results of post-intervention showed a positive effect in teaching by using the proposed authentic materials.

## 3.3.3. Role of pragmatic competence

Notably, the TGU students could be able *to interpret cultural references and figures of speech* which are related with the interpretation of cultural and figurative meanings in the jokes in the post-test. As Bachman’s (1990) defines sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to perform the language functions in appropriate ways for various language use contexts. Thus, in order to help TGU students to be confident and courageous for joking with foreign tourists and reciting English jokes in the joke-telling contest, the proposed authentic materials were assembled with cultural jokes, ethnic jokes and pieces of reading on cultures of the countries whose people have commonly travelled to Viet Nam and Khanh Hoa province.

## 3.3.4. Role of teaching methods to the proposed authentic materials

The teaching methods or the ways how to use the proposed materials in classroom play a crucial role in enhancing the TGU students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes. The application of teaching techniques to the original materials of humorous language such as question-and-answer, the communication between learner and foreigner, and role play were used throughout the learning process. Especially, the method of role play or simulative games in which the students were divided into two groups, tour guide group and tourist group for practice attracted the students’ participants and intensify the learning effectiveness.

# 3.4. Chapter conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of the data collected and analysed in the two phases of the study, preliminary and intervention. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods with data collection instruments of questionnaire, tests and interview questions was employed so that the collected data provided a comprehensive picture of the facts. The data were described and analysed using the SPSS with the results in the forms of percentage and means of T-test.

# CONCLUSION

This is the final part of the thesis which reviews the whole study with the summaries of the main findings, followed by the implication, limitation of the present study and suggestions for further studies. Obviously, the present study describes fully and thoroughly how to develop tour guide students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes. It began with a comprehensive review of some essential and relevant aspects of humour and English jokes through the theories of verbal humour, mechanism of humour, nature of humour and directions to making sense of humour in English jokes. The ability to make sense of humour for tour guide students not just for the one of appreciation of humour but performance of humour with English jokes to foreign tourists when they practice their tour guiding job in the future. However, telling English jokes is not easy for learners who learn English as a foreign language for the TGU students at Khanh Hoa University. In theory, their ability is supported by humour competence in which there is a contribution of Hay’s model of humour appreciation, Bloom’s taxonomy of language development and pragmatic competence. A kind of authentic materials is needed to build the humour competence for the TGU students should be ranged from the basic level of recognition, understanding, agreeing to appreciation. The final objective of the present study was that by the end of the process, the TGU students were able to appreciate humour and recite full jokes with English speaking tourists. In order to reach the target of the study, two research questions were raised. Accordingly, two phases of study were organized namely preliminary and intervention, of which needs analysis for a kind of authentic materials and an explicit instruction took place respectively. A mixed method was designated as the key research methodology to answer the above research questions. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods was in the emergence of quantitative as a fundamental role and qualitative as a supplemental one during the research process. As such data collection methods which were selected were survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observation.

## 1. Recapitulation

**Finding 1**

The finding to answer the first research question is that a set of authentic materials based on competency was selected consisting of authentic English jokes. The materials were made on the foundation of the needs analysis. The TGU students needed to learn the humor in English jokes to be used in everyday life so that they could apply and use funny stories and humour to entertain foreign visitors during their guided tours in future. Yet comprehending and appreciating humour through English jokes was completely difficult for TGU students at Khanh Hoa University, so they could not tell English jokes. It was necessary to provide tour guide students with English jokes because English jokes were good source for communication in tour guiding practice. The need for making sense of humor in English jokes was huge. Especially in the opinions by experienced tour guides and those in the travel guide industry that tour guides should have a sense of humor and prepare for themselves English jokes to deliver when necessary because humor was really a soft skill for the tour guide. English jokes were surely not for Vietnamese tourists, but they were written for anyone who could speak English and master this language.

Thus, the proposed authentic materials which were selected were followed a set of criteria for selection and adaptation for tour guide students, such as the appropriate types and topics of English jokes for using in the English language classroom and tour guiding practice. Based on the results from tourists’ favourite types and topics, the jokes were selected from comic books, internet, newspaper, etc. Criteria for jokes selection were set up. The jokes were written for English-speaking people. They belonged to the style self-enhancing humour and suitably used for the language teaching in classroom. The language, grammar and length were right for learners at pre-intermediate and intermediate level of English. The jokes were in the three categories of linguistic, cultural and reality-based ones with such linguistic ambiguities as homophone, morpheme, polysemy, syntax, pragmatic ambiguities as locution, illocution, perlocution, relevance, maxims of quality, quantity, relation and manner, and cultural ambiguity. The topics of the jokes were attributed to socio-cultural knowledge with the social world and working world. The social world consisted of interpersonal interactions as family, friends, pets, restaurant, bar, hotel, popular culture as fashion, library, school, social stereotype and entertainment as sports, television and movies. The working world encompassed office life and professions. These authentic materials were used to enhance the TGU students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes.

**Finding 2**

The finding to answer the second research question was that the TGU students could recognize, understand and appreciate the humour in English jokes and more than that many of them could recite full joke story successful.

Ambiguities of the English jokes were recognized and understood by TGU students. At the level of elementary of the humorous language, linguistic ambiguities such as homophone, lexis and syntax were more comprehensive than morphology. Cultural ambiguity was quite well identified except some cultural contexts which did not introduced in the intervention. Thus, it was the variety of the cultural ambiguities that made difficult for the students to make sense of the humour in English jokes. However, the three categories of English jokes were interested by the TGU students.

It was completely possible to teach English jokes for better humour interpretation. However, the comprehension of the ambiguities in English jokes was mostly dependable on the linguistic competence and knowledge of society and culture that L2/FL learners attained. Firstly, insufficiency of English words, and grammatical structures, incorrect pronunciation of words and unidentified context of the joke much affected the comprehension and interpretation of humour in English jokes. Secondly, the knowledge of culture facilitated better interpreting the humour in English jokes. Thirdly, the length of the joke did influence the interest of learners in reading English jokes. It can be seen in Table that the percentage of the subjects who could identify and explain the funny points in the jokes dramatically increased in comparison of Test 1 and Test 2, apart from Joke 2 and Joke 9. Consequently, the number of these subjects was average up to between seven and eleven persons and the biggest was 13 persons on Joke 4 in Test 2.

For ambiguity, meaning of words, structure of the joke, pronunciation of words and the context of the joke, at first the three categories of the jokes were equally difficult to comprehend, but later Reality-based jokes were the easiest to understand, the linguistic jokes were the most understand and cultural jokes were more difficult than reality-based and easier than linguistic jokes. For the length of the joke, reality-based jokes were the most difficult for comprehension of the three categories both before and after the intervention though the degree of difficulty could reduce. For the cultural features in the jokes, it was cultural joke that stood first in both before and after the intervention.

Finally, the finding of the measurement of fun for the students’ joke telling performance showed that the TGU students were able to understand all kinds of jokes and tell jokes. Two-thirds of the students could tell full-story jokes with good pronunciation, one-third could tell full-story jokes with good pronunciation and gesture and two students were the best joke tellers. Therefore, the use of authentic materials in the classroom was proved to be effective.

## 2. Implications

### 2.1. Methodological implications

The present study used mixed research methods as a contribution to the literature of research methodologies for pragmatic studies. It was a design to follow an explanatory sequential approach in which the quantitative methods were emergently sequential with the qualitative ones (Creswell, 2011). Actually, it was a process in which quantitative findings firstly explored with a large samples and numbers and then qualitative ones were done for better addition and preference. From this initial exploration, the second approach with qualitative findings was used to develop assessment measures that could be administered to a smaller sample. In the tentative planned qualitative approach, interviews and observations data were collected.

### 2.2. Theoretical implication

The theoretical framework for developing tour guide students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes accommodates the researcher with a significant practice in the present study. The framework is a stacked system which is made up of authentic materials, humour competence and humour appreciation. The authentic materials works as a central supplying an empirical source, humour competence is overlapped as level 2 providing means and humour appreciation is as the highest development of the system. The framework addresses that canned English jokes carries the characteristics of verbal humour so for appreciating this kind of humour or its incongruity, it is necessary to catch up not only the knowledge of humour such as theories of humour, mechanism of humour, sematic and pragmatic perspectives. In order to do this, it is important to develop the humour competence that is the ability to recognize, comprehend, appreciate the humour and the top of it is to be able to recite or retell the funny English stories.

### 2.3. Pedagogical implication

The present study has made a remarkable contribution to pedagogical implication. First of all, it inspired the TGUs students that it is advantageous to be able to appreciate humour and telling jokes at future workplace. That is because with joking and humorous episodes and cultures in the field of tourism the proposed authentic materials were warmly accepted. Results showed that most of the students were happy and very happy with playing jokes with friends in groups and sharing jokes with each other in class. They all were satisfied and very satisfied with the authentic jokes and videos and cartoons of funny statements in the materials and especially they all got the fun of the jokes. The final results presented that most of the TGUs could appreciate humour in English jokes and could retell jokes to foreign tourists.

## 3. Limitations

The present study is really a complex investigation consisting of two phases: the preliminary and the intervention. That is the study would like to develop tour guide students’ ability to make sense of humour in English jokes at Khanh Hoa University in Nha Trang, a tourist city. Actually, so as to develop this ability, it is necessary to build a kind of materials for a piloting course and measure the results after the students taking the course.

The 20 TGU students randomly selected for the intervention study to develop the ability to sense jokes were with the hope that they would have good foreign language skills. However, in spite of being undergraduates and their required language skill capacity being equivalent to the B2 level in terms of foreign language competence, the students in fact could mostly be good at grammar and one-third were pretty reliable at speaking while the remaining ones were very weak at language skills. This fact diminished the capacity of appreciating humour in English jokes.

## 4. Suggestions for further studies

The present study studies the development of the ability to appreciate the humour in English jokes through authentic materials. Then a kind of authentic materials was selected and put into use effectively. There are plenty of practical implications for the results of this study. At the same time, further studies are suggested by the limitations of these results. One suggestion is that there should a collection of authentic jokes which contain more complex humour such as incongruous genre and incongruous world in the Linguistic humour structure spectrum by Obrst (2012). Another interesting suggestion is that it is advisable to have a deep look into discovering the role of socio-cultural competence in joke performance and creation in the workplace of tour guiding job.

**RESEARCHER’S PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE THESIS**

1. Giới thiệu mô hình biên soạn giáo trình tiếng Anh chuyên ngành dựa trên đường hướng lấy hoạt động học làm trung tâm. Tạp chí khoa học của Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội, Volume 60, Number 1, 2015, tr. 123-130.

2. Yếu tố hài hước trong truyện cười tiếng Anh: Từ văn bản đến ứng dụng cho lớp học ngoại ngữ. Tạp chí khoa học của Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội, Volume 60, Number 2, 2015, tr. 138-147.