Mastering second language humour: the ultimate challenge

Laurence Vincent-Durroux
Université Grenoble Alpes, LIDILEM, France
laurence.durroux@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr

Kerry Mullan
RMIT University, Australia
kerry.mullan@rmit.edu.au

Caroline David
Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3, EMMA, France
caroline.david@univ-montp3.fr

Christine Béal
Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3, Praxiling, France
christine.beal@univ-montp3.fr

Cécile Poussard
Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3, EMMA, France
cecile.poussard@univ-montp3.fr

Abstract

This small-scale study on verbal humour takes place within a larger project entitled "From perception to oral production", which aims to identify the links between comprehension and production processes and the sources of difficulty for French learners of English. The data consist of three comparable corpora of filmed semi-structured interviews with first (L1) and second (L2) language students: French-French L1; English-English L1; and English L1 with L2. The interviews revolve around the same extract of an American romantic comedy, which the students were asked to describe and comment upon. Instances of spontaneous humour were found to occur in all corpora and were analysed using the cross-cultural comparative model previously used for French-English comparative studies of verbal humour (Béal & Mullan 2013; 2017a; Mullan & Béal 2018a).

The humour used by the native speakers of French (N=7) and English (N=7) served as the initial basis for comparison with the L2 English speakers (N=34). It was found that the humour

and laughter in the L1 interviews were employed by both parties to achieve certain pragmatic functions related to this particular institutional setting: the participants used humour primarily to create a connection with the interviewer (often through implicit references, and especially where both participants were female). The French students speaking English as L2 tended to use self-oriented humour as a face-saving device to deflect from their production or comprehension difficulties.

The use of humour by all L1 and L2 participants nevertheless reflected specific cultural tendencies outlined in Béal & Mullan (2013; 2017a) and Mullan & Béal (2018a), such as the prevalence of third-party oriented humour in French interactions and of self-deprecating humour in English. In sum, and perhaps unsurprisingly, we show that the French learners of English have mastered some aspects of humour in their L2, but still exhibit most of the characteristics of verbal humour from their native French.

1. Introduction

According to Skogmyr Marian et al. (2017: 137), humour intelligibility is complex, as humour results from "interrelated semiotic resources" (Ford & Fox 2010: 339) in sequences in which the speaker adjusts in real time to the interlocutor's language and behaviour. It is therefore likely to be difficult to manage for L2 speakers and could constitute the "ultimate challenge" in mastering a foreign language.

In L2 research, most previous studies have looked at the understanding of humour and at its close link to proficiency (Bell 2009; Fadel & Al-Bargi 2018: 268-269) but few studies have looked at its production as such by L2 speakers and at how humour is brought about in interaction. This latter aspect has been examined by Skogmyr Marian et al. (2017) in L2-L2 conversations.

We will try to go further by looking at humour in intercultural interactions and comparable cross-cultural interactions, in order to provide answers to the following research questions:

- Are differences observable in the type and the use of humour in L1 vs L2 learner speech?
- Do L2 speakers fully access the features of humour in the target language?
- To what extent do the features of humour in L2 speakers come close to previous findings on L1 humour in French and English as described in Béal & Mullan 2013, Béal & Mullan 2017a, Mullan & Béal 2018a?

2. Theoretical background

2.1. State of the art

The area of humour studies is vast, interdisciplinary, and complex. Our focus here is on spontaneous context-bound humour in everyday interaction – often referred to as verbal or conversational humour, to differentiate it from other more structured types of humour such as scripted humour, stand-up comedy, or joke telling. Although Coates restricted conversational humour to "humorous talk occurring in the informal conversation of friends" (2007: 29), Dynel expanded the scope to encompass various verbal discourses created spontaneously during conversation for the sake of amusing the participants, either contributing to the content or

diverting it into a more playful frame where the participants do not really mean what they say (2009: 1286). It is in this latter sense that we use the term here.

Many initial seminal studies on verbal humour focused on formulating definitions and creating categories and theoretical frameworks for the analysis of humour (Attardo & Raskin 1991; Dynel 2009; 2013; Norrick & Chiaro 2009; Raskin 1985; 2008). Many of these studies investigated specific forms of humour such as joke-telling (Norrick 1993), self-deprecating humour (Hay 2001; Lampert & Ervin-Tripp 2006) or dead-pan delivery and other styles of humour (Craik et al. 1996). Humour in interaction was also analysed in various different settings: in getting acquainted (Haugh 2011), in the work-place (Holmes & Marra 2002), and among friends (Coates 2007). The pragmatic functions of humour and their relation to the theory of politeness have also been the focus of many studies (e.g. Attardo 2003; Dynel 2011). Recent work also explores the limits between humour and other discursive phenomena such as irony (Rabatel 2013), caricature, or argumentation (Vivero Garcia 2013).

2.1.1. Humour in L1

A significant proportion of the existing literature on interactional humour focuses on English, including different varieties of English (Goddard 2006; Haugh 2017; Haugh & Bousfield 2012; Sinkeviciute 2017), although there are some notable exceptions such as Charaudeau (2006), Milner Davis (2005), Milner Davis & Chey (2013) and Priego-Valverde (2003).[1]

Studies comparing conversational humour in English and other languages/cultures are relatively recent, and come with specific requirements. The starting point should not be a particular type of humour; rather, the analysis should be driven by the data, which must be similar enough in the two languages to be able to link differences in preferential choices and discursive strategies back to the culture (cf. Béal & Mullan 2013). We should not therefore speak of French or British or Australian humour per se, but of humour in French/British/Australian culture. Cultural conventions govern when/where/how/why we use humour, rather than the nature, the topic or the style of humour.

2.1.2. Humour in L2

When it comes to humour in a second language (L2), a survey of the literature shows that humour is mostly examined in the L2 classroom and from several points of view. As an emotion, it can be positive and a good way to ease the potentially face-threatening environment of the classroom: it relaxes students and reduces their anxiety. It can also be negative if the students feel excluded, threatened, or even humiliated (Kim & Park 2017: 255-257; Fadel & Al-Bargi 2018: 267-276). As humour occurs in interaction, it is also a way to promote peer interaction, which helps develop language practice and use (Leslie 2015). Various studies show that humour can facilitate language acquisition (Bell 2009: 249) by improving students' capacity to recall the interactions occurring during humorous sequences (Bell 2005) and by helping students "to produce more complex and creative acts of language use" (Fadel & Al-Bargi 2018: 263). Bell (2009) provides suggestions to teachers for incorporating humour into the language classroom (Bell 2009: 241), based on her previous study of humour in intercultural interaction (Bell 2002). In this study, Bell found that wordplay was very rare, with only one occurrence out of 106 when the participant initiated humour; she also found that in advanced L2 learners, only 10 per cent out of 204 instances of humour were self-teases, a result which we will compare to our own data when we look at the targets of humour. The role of laughter was studied by Skogmyr Marian et al. (2017) who found that elementary level L2 speakers of French laugh when reacting to

---

[1] See also Sinkeviciute & Dynel (2017); Mullan & Béal (2018b); and the GRIALE group (Grupo de Investigación sobre la ironía y el humor en español; http://griale.dfelg.ua.es/).

humorous sequences. Partington (2006) suggests, however, that laughter may have other causes than humour, such as nervousness and fear, which could be implied by a low level of proficiency. Although laughter and humour often go together, humour does not necessarily entail laughter (Charaudeau 2006: 20).

2.2. Linguistic definition of verbal humour in conversation/laughter

Definitions of humour – and there are many – range from the very general "something that makes a person laugh or smile" (Ross 1998: 2)[2], or "verbal or nonverbal speech act, often resulting in laughter" (Kim & Park 2017: 243), to the more specific "utterances which are identified [...], on the basis of paralinguistic, prosodic and discursive clues, as intended by the speaker(s) to be amusing and perceived to be amusing by at least some of the participants" (Holmes & Marra 2002: 67). In other words, the definition of what qualifies as humour in conversation relies on a mixture of speaker intention and listener interpretation, based on a number of clues. This latter definition is one of the most widely used in studies of conversational or verbal humour, and as such, is the most suited to our study and will be adopted here.

According to Cook (2000: 123, quoted by Kim & Park 2017: 243), humour brings together various features of language play:

- linguistic forms (such as "patterning of forms", "emphasis" and "repetition");
- semantics (such as "indeterminate meaning" – including foreign language, ambiguity, "vital or important subject matter" – including sexual relations, "reference to an alternative reality", "inversion of language/reality relation");
- pragmatics ("focus upon performance and upon the speaker and/or writer", "use in congregation and/or intimate interaction", "creation of solidarity and/or antagonism and competition", "no direct usefulness", "preservation or inversion of the social order", "enjoyment and/or value").

Many of these features appear in the four-dimensional model we have chosen to adopt for the analysis of the humour in our data (see below).

2.3. A four-dimensional model for the analysis of verbal humour

Basing our study on Béal & Mullan's previous work (2013), we will consider that conversational (or in this case, verbal) humour implies four dimensions to be looked into. Clearly, a humorous utterance almost always implies a "target" – someone or something the humour is aimed at. The target is not necessarily the recipient (the person to whom the humorous utterance is addressed), for example, where the humour is directed at a third party who may or may not be present. For this reason, the interplay between the speaker, the target, and the recipient requires further analysis. The language dimension refers to the actual linguistic and/or discursive devices or mechanisms used by speakers to produce humour: word play, pun, irony, implicit references, distortion of reality, etc. Humour also fulfils a number of pragmatic/interpersonal functions, such as bonds/connections between speakers and face management issues. Finally, the interactional dimension has to be taken into account: it focuses on the co-construction of the sequence of humour, with humour being either initiated in the first turn or used in response to a previous turn.

The four dimensions of analysis and the features to be looked at in each dimension can be detailed as follows (Table 1):

---

[2] Ross does go on to acknowledge that the relationship between humour and laughter is not that straightforward and that one can often happen without the other.

Table 1. Humour analysis: Béal & Mullan's four-dimensional model.

1. The speaker/target/recipient interplay
- self-oriented
- recipient-oriented
- third-party oriented
- non-specific target

2. The language dimension
- **linguistic play**: e.g. play-on-words, play on sounds of words, putting on an accent or a funny voice; borrowing words from other languages; exaggeration and understatement
- **discursive strategies**: e.g. implicit references; incongruous images/situations; personification of plant, animal, or inanimate object; distortion of reality (of self-image, situation, participants); internal logic (fantasy or absurd humour with escalation, collaborative scenarios)

3. The different pragmatic functions
e.g.:- creating a bond/connection with other participants
  - promoting egalitarianism and not boasting
  - face concerns (humour that threatens the other's face; humour used to repair real or potential threat; humour in self-defence to a perceived face threat)

4. The interactional dimension
- response to a previous turn (second turn of an adjacency pair)
- initiated in a first turn + ensuing responses
- construction of a collaborative humorous scenario (fantasy humour)

Although this four-dimensional model was originally designed to analyse conversational humour in social visits among friends, it lends itself well to the current study due to the comparative and interactional nature of the data. It should be noted, however, that the humour identified in our data consists more of a combination of laughter and humour governed by the interactional situation rather than the spontaneous humour identified in the social visits.

3. Methodology

This small-scale study on interactional humour is part of a larger project examining the links between comprehension and production processes and the sources of difficulty for French learners of English. The data consist of three comparable corpora of filmed semi-structured interviews with first (L1) and second (L2) language students: French-French L1 (N=7); English-English L1 (N=7); and English L1 with L2 (N=34).

While the larger project was not originally designed to elicit humour from the participants, instances of spontaneous humour and laughter were identified in all but one interview in all three corpora, allowing for the examination of cross-cultural (L1 French and L1 English) and intercultural (L2 with L1 English) humour in the interviews. While using our two L1 groups as our control groups, we will primarily focus on the humour used by the French students when

speaking English as L2 to assess their ability to understand and produce humour in a foreign language.

3.1. Data collection

In order to meet established criteria for the comparison of discourse in interaction (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2005: 285-309), the data was collected in the following manner: the data consist of three comparable corpora of filmed semi-structured interviews between first (L1) and second (L2) language students: French-French L1; English-English L1; and English L1 with L2. The corpora were created as identically as possible in terms of age, education, and similar numbers of males and females in each group, thereby ensuring that the comparative focus is on the linguistic dimension. There were:

- 7 L1 French-French dyads (French interviewees with French interviewers: six female-female dyads and one female interviewer with male interviewee)
- 7 L1 English-English dyads (English interviewees with English interviewers: six female-female dyads and one female interviewer with male interviewee)
- 34 dyads with English L2 speakers interviewed by English L1 interviewers. Four dyads were exclusively male; 15 were exclusively female. In seven dyads, the interviewer was a female speaker and the interviewee a male speaker. In seven dyads, the interviewer was a male speaker and the interviewee a female speaker.

Apart from two slightly older students, the participants were aged between 20 and 25 years. They were all tertiary educated and studying at Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3, France. While the L1 students were native speakers of either French or English, the L2 participants were French and were studying English as major in their second year at university, following five to seven years of English secondary instruction. They were sometimes acquainted. Their socio-economic background was not asked of them.

The interviews with the participants revolved around the same extract of an American romantic comedy *Because I Said So* (2007); the French title *A la recherche de l'homme parfait* equates to *In Search of the Perfect Man*. The French-French L1 participants watched the French dubbed extract for their interviews, and all the other participants (English L1 and French L2) watched the original version in English. The film extract lasts two minutes and thirty seconds. It opens with a young woman, Milly, getting ready for the first visit of a young man. Quite unexpectedly, Milly's mother pops in and insists on talking to her at length and distracting her from the cookies she is baking. As soon as Milly finally succeeds in getting her mother to leave the house, the young man arrives and offers Milly an unusual and unidentifiable gift. After watching the extract twice, the participants were asked to describe what they had just watched, then to interpret and assess the relationships between the characters.

The total recordings amount to 12 hours (approximately 15 minutes for each interview). For transcription purposes, ICOR[3] norms were used, and the transcripts were cross-checked by the researchers involved in the study. The transcriptions and recordings were then analysed using elements of Conversation Analysis (Sacks et al. 1974) and Interactional Discourse Analysis (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2005).

3.2. Selection of humorous sequences

In ICOR transcription norms, laughter is explicitly mentioned in the transcripts. Partington (2006) shows that laughter is an interactional communicative feature which may be caused by several factors, such as nervousness, fear, and of course humour. As we saw earlier, laughter

---

[3] http://icar.univ-lyon2.fr/projets/corinte/documents/2013_Conv_ICOR_250313.pdf.

and humour often go together, although humour does not necessarily entail laughter (Charaudeau 2006: 20). We therefore selected the sequences[4] in which laughter was noted in the transcripts but also those in which amusement was to be found, following Holmes & Marra's above-mentioned definition of conversational humour (Holmes & Marra 2002: 67). In the context of interviews between L2 and native speakers, which is the case in our research, it has been found that native speakers tend to be accommodating to L2 speakers (Bell 2009: 245). This may also be the case in our data, but its importance cannot be easily evaluated.

To characterize the humour in the L2 speakers, we selected the sequences in which the humour was triggered by the interviewees (i.e. French learners of English), which yielded a corpus of 218 sequences. To make sure that a sequence was relevant for this study, the researchers all independently identified the presence of humour and then double-checked each other's interpretations. In one of the dyads, no humorous sequences were found (the study is thus based on 33 dyads). The humour revolved around a number of recurring themes, such as the invasive mother, the type of film, personal experience, claiming ignorance, sexual innuendos, value judgments about the daughter and the man in the extract, an inability to understand or say something, and value judgments about the interviewer (see Section 4.3.1, Tables 2 and 3).

As for the L1 speakers, the number of interviews of native speakers in both languages was much smaller, because they were not the main focus of the study (the latter being L2 performance) but rather a control group. Therefore, they yielded a smaller number of examples, which may not be statistically as reliable, but constitute nevertheless an interesting "sounding board" for the L2 results. For the L1 speakers' use of language, we take into account the humour coming from both interviewers and interviewees, whereas in the sections focusing on L2 mastery of humour in English, only the humour produced by the L2 speakers is examined. We will compare our results to those of previous studies on conversational humour in French and Australian English to determine whether previously observed cultural tendencies remain the same across different types of encounters and if not, to what extent the interview situation changes the dynamic of the interaction (Béal & Mullan 2013; Béal & Mullan 2017a; Mullan & Béal 2018a; Holmes & Marra 2002; Priego-Valverde 2003).

The overall aim of our analysis in this article is to see whether any significant differences observed in the way L1 and L2 speakers use verbal humour can be traced back to their cultural rules of communication (or "*ethos communicatif*", Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2005) or to the learners' mastery of the language.

4. Results

The sequences were analysed following the four-dimensional model which takes into account:
- the speaker/target/recipient interplay
- the humour devices: linguistic mechanisms and/or discursive strategies used by speakers
- the pragmatic/interpersonal functions of humour
- the interactional dimension.

---

[4] In our study, a sequence is a passage dealing with the same topic; it closes when the interactional episode is given up to move on to another topic. Our definition is adapted from Skogmyr Marian et al. (2017: 132).

4.1. The speaker/target/recipient interplay

L2 Speakers: the humorous sequence almost always implies a target, which can be the recipient, the speaker, or a third party. In our data, humour is mostly third-party oriented (139 cases, i.e. 66 per cent). It is self-oriented in 48 cases (23 per cent) and recipient-oriented in only 23 cases (11 per cent)[5], as shown in Figure 1.
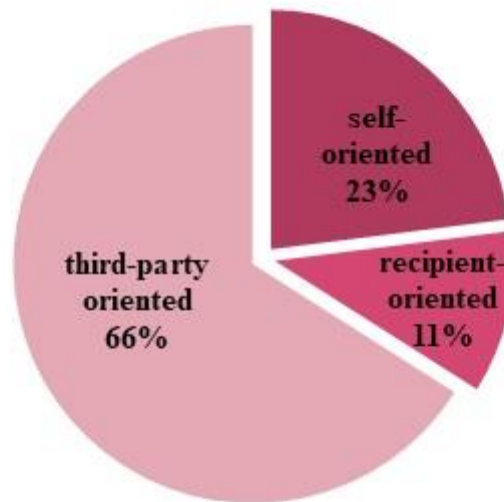
Figure 1. Speaker/target/interplay in L2

L1 Speakers: the lower percentage of third-party oriented humour in the English native speakers (Figure 2) with 36 per cent vs 66 per cent for the L2 (Figure 1) and 57 per cent for the French L1 (Figure 3) is the most salient feature of the comparison. Although the percentages between the English and French native speakers were not quite the same as in previous studies (Béal & Mullan 2017a: 27), the general tendency is confirmed. The French speakers tend to favour humour at the expense of a third party regardless of the language they are using to express themselves (57 per cent L1 and 66 per cent L2).

---

[5] For each dimension under study, a sequence may display more than one feature. Therefore, the number of cases identified here does not necessarily fit with the total number of sequences.
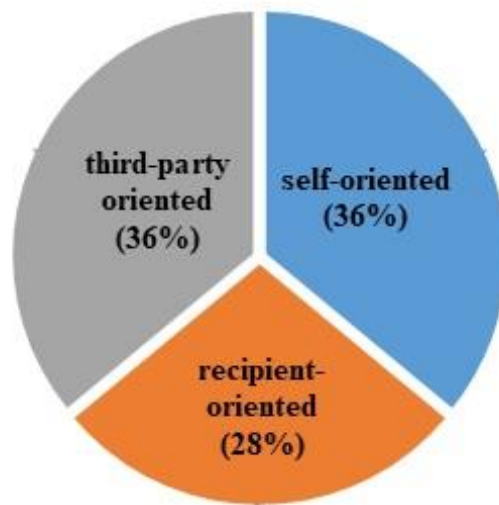
Figure 2. Speaker/target/interplay in English L1
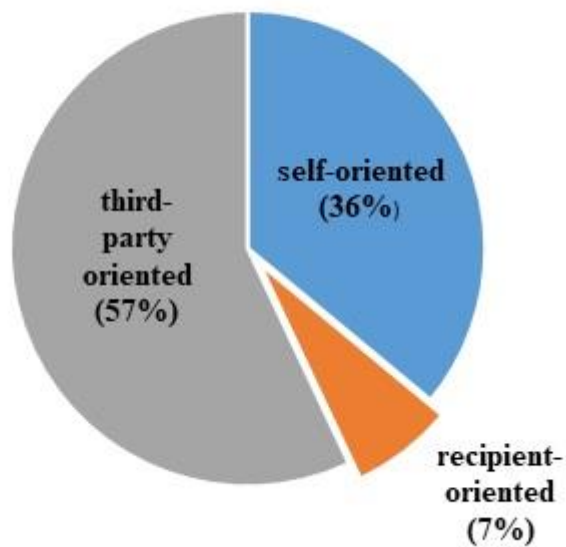
Figure 3. Speaker/target/interplay in French L1

Let us now look at the detail of the three different types of "target".

4.1.1. Third-party oriented humour

L2 speakers: most frequently, the target is third-party oriented, with the personality of the mother, the type of film and sexual innuendos in the extract as the main targets of humour. The mother is mocked for being intrusive (example 1), the film for being a stupid romcom (example 2), the daughter for her provocative attitude (example 3):

(1)

```
INT⁶        ok and do you think the mother's gonna come back or-
pop1a_32  maybe maybe
INT       <((laughing))maybe/>
pop1a_32  she's a kind of sticky
INT       <((laughing))okay> all right then so m: what do you
          personally feel about the relationship between these
          these characters
```

(2)
```
INT       euh so would you go to see euh a film like this
pop1a_01  heum euh i would watch it on tv but i wouldn't go to to
          the ci- euh to the cinema to watch it
INT       okay
pop1a_01  yes i would watch it but not ((laughter)) pay for it
INT       ((laughter)) okay i see euh and would you like to see
          the whole film euh the one that you you
```

(3)
```
INT       =yeah and wha- what makes you say er: it's her
          boyfriend\
pop1a_48  er:: she dressed like som- a girl that is waiting for
          her boyfriend to come <((laughs))>
INT       okay <((laughs))> bu- is is there anything tha- er::
          tha- that tells you about their relationship\
```

L1 speakers: in our L1 corpora, as in the L2 corpus, the main targets for the native speakers are the intrusive mother (examples 4 and 5) and the kind of film (examples 6 and 7):

(4)
```
pop1a_21  and mum drops in apparently she does not expect her
          <((laughing))>
```

(5)
```
pop1a_35  […] pendant euh pendant une bonne partie de l'extrait la
          fille elle essaye de mettre <((en riant)) la mère à la
          porte> et euh elle finit par y arriver (.)

          for the better part of the extract the daughter is
          trying <((laughing)) to get rid of the mother> and err
          in the end she manages to do it (.)
```

(6)
```
pop1a_60  you know it's one of these films I would watch like when
          I had a hangover I'd just lay in bed and you put it
          on(xx)
```

(7)
```
pop09     euh: pff dans l'idée c'est un peu les films j'pense à
          l'eau de ro:se comme on peut en voir souvent « coup de
          foudre à machin » truc comme ça .h avec des situations
```

---

⁶ INT = interviewer; pop = interviewee.

> *un peu d'quiproquo […] non j'pense pas que*
> *j'sacrifierais deux heures ((rires))*
>
> err: pff you know it's the kind of film I think a rom-
> com like you can see all the time a la "my big fat
> stupid wedding" something like that .h a kinda comedy of
> errors […] no I don't think I'd want to waste two hours
> on it((laughter))

However, unlike the L2 data, there are no comments containing sexual innuendo. Another difference with the L2 corpus is that humorous comments about the cookie smell only appear in both L1 corpora (cf. example 17 below). This suggests that the L2 students may have had trouble understanding the full implication of the scene and the exchange between Millie and her mother, where she implied that Milly was using the smell of baking cookies as a seduction strategy to impress her date.

4.1.2. Self-oriented humour

L2 speakers: when humour and/or laughter is self-oriented, it is mostly because the interviewees mock their own problems. These problems may be:

- some difficulty in the oral comprehension of the dialogues of the extract or in the comprehension of a detail in the film extract (example 8);
- their production problem, sometimes having recourse to French words. Here, humour or laughter serves face-saving strategies (example 9).

(8)
```
INT       =okay\ and er: when he:: when he comes to the [DOOR/&
pop01                                                  &[yes\&
INT                                                         &[he
          brings her a [GIFT/&
pop01                  &[yeah: (i don't i don't) i didn't
          underSTAND/=
INT       = did you see what it WAS/
pop01     er it was\ to the rose but (i don't) i didn't understand
          what=
INT       =right but heu did [it seems to you &
pop01                        &[she she smells THAT&
INT                          &[yeah&
pop01                        &[ROSE <((laughs))
INT       so the the what a does that SCENE\ makes you think/ does
          it(0,5) give you any ideas/ can you can you imagine what
          it could be=
pop01     =er an aerosol [// <((laughs))>
```

(9)
```
INT       [(inaud) another] it's possible and euh: (.) what do you
          think the mother will be doing in the rest of the film
          do you think she (.) still be there

pop1a_20  hm yes she will à mon av- euh to my mind (laughing) she
          will (.) keep passing by
```

L1 speakers: both L1 corpora produce 36 per cent self-oriented humour, slightly higher than the L2 speakers, but the main difference between the native speakers and the L2 speakers lies in the nature of the humour in question. For the former, unlike the L2 speakers, this self-mocking is understandably not linked to problems of comprehension or expression. It is a self-deprecating comment used when admitting to enjoying a film which is clearly rather silly. However, in so doing, the speaker shows that at least a part of her is aware of her 'low standards', and therefore, it is also a face-saving strategy (example 10). The French speaker in example 11 further minimises her potential shame by claiming curiosity as her motivation to keep watching.

(10)
```
    INT         yeah tis the kind of film you'd go and watch or
    pop1a_60    yeah unfortunately yeah ((laughter))
    INT         unfortunately ((laughter))
    pop1a_60    yeah just I really like questioning my choices like now
                being interviewed by film ((laughter)) on the types of
                films I watch (laughter)
```

(11)
```
    INT         d'accord donc tu donc euh ça pourrait te donner envie de
                voir le film en entier par exemple
    pop1a_50    ouais
    INT         ouais/ (.) d'accord\ et euh pourquoi euh
    pop1a_50    ne serait-ce que pour savoir <((en riant)) si ça va
                marcher ou pas derrière (.) avec les deux rendez-vous
                euh>/=

    INT         okay so you so er would it make you want to see the rest
                of the film by any chance
    pop1a_50    yeah
    INT         yeah/ (.)okay\ and er why er
    pop1a_50    well just to know <((laughing)) whether it's going to
                work out or not afterwards(.)with her two dates er>/=
```

Another kind of self-oriented humorous comment is specific to the English corpus. Some interviewees draw a self-deprecating comparison between the glamorous character in the film and themselves, stating for example, that they wouldn't mind being in the same position of having to juggle two boyfriends (example 12), or that they are not good at multi-tasking and a terribly messy cook (example 13).

(12)
```
    pop1a_63    err I would've liked to have been in a situation where
                I've got a date or two definitely erm
    INT         ((laugh))
```

(13)
```
    pop1a_62    no I'd just get everything in a mess ((laughter))
```

Such examples can be seen as typical of English humour and have been extensively commented upon in previous publications (Béal & Mullan 2013; 2017a). In those corpora of social visits, the examples of self-oriented humour initiated by the English speakers were found to be more self-deprecating than in the French corpus and to fulfil a somewhat ingratiating function, as is the case above. Whereas in the French corpus, such comments were more often

a form of repair, and in particular a form of self-repair in relation to one's own speech (Béal & Mullan 2017a: 38). This is exactly what is happening here when the L2 English speakers described the film viewing in the previous section. While speaking in English, they actually use self-oriented humour in a typically French way (i.e. mostly in meta-discursive comments about their own speech).

4.1.3. Recipient-oriented humour

L2 speakers: although there are only 23 occurrences of recipient-oriented humour (11 per cent) in L2 speech, this target should be mentioned as it has not previously been found to be characteristic of French humour. It shows that these speakers may be accessing this aspect of Anglo-Saxon humour as in example 14.

```
(14)
   INT       no not really okay ER:: er: do:: the characters agree or
             do they disagree\
   pop1a_48  (2) er:: (1.7) it's a weird question [<((laughs))>
   INT                                            [okay [what do er&
   pop1a_48                                             [(xxx)
   INT       &they talk about er a few things er
   pop1a_48  a:h okay er:=
```

L1 speakers: in our previous studies, recipient-oriented humour was found to be more prevalent in the English corpus than in the French one (46 per cent of examples vs 24 per cent) (Béal & Mullan 2017a: 27).

Although this trend is confirmed here, the nature of recipient-oriented humour is different from that found in the social visits (where a lot of teasing took place)[7] and is very similar in both native speaker corpora in the interview situation. The humour is mostly initiated by the interviewer towards the interviewee as a form of face management and is clearly a positive politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson 1987).

For example, in the two instances below (examples 15 and 16), the interviewer exaggerates the actual imposition of the interview: "it wasn't too stressful", "you did well" – as if the person were a student sitting for an oral exam, or "*Je te libère*", a term used in relation to releasing hostages. The intention is probably to compensate for the slightly awkward situation of the interview/experiment:

```
(15)
   INT       =okay that's good that's all I wanted to ask [you&
   pop04                                                  [okay&
   INT       &[it says a lot thank you very much <((laughing)) it
             wasn't too stressful>=
   pop04     no::// <((laughing))>
   INT       (inaud.) you are okay you did well
```

```
(16)
   INT       d'accord ((rires))
   INT       okay bon ben je te remercie beaucoup
   pop05     bah de rien ((rires))
   INT       (rires) c'est fini je te libère
```

---

[7] This is unsurprising, since the participants all knew each other well.

```
INT        okay ((laughter))
INT        okay alright then thanks a lot
pop05      no worries ((laughter))
INT        ((laughter)) it's over I'm setting you free
```

These atypical results can be seen as a response to the context of the interview, with the two L1 speakers creating a form of complicity[8] among themselves. The L2 speakers, as was shown above (example 14), try to use recipient-oriented humour in this context in a slightly more acerbic or aggressive way to distance themselves from a situation in which they might perceive themselves as being potentially judged for their level of proficiency.

4.2. The language dimension

When examining sequences with verbal humour, we must look specifically at the language dimension of humour, which can be either linguistic or discursive (cf. Table 1).

L2 speakers: in our data, the general tendency (Figure 4) is to use discursive devices (149 cases, i.e. 69 per cent), as do the English speakers in general, compared to linguistic play (67 cases, i.e. 31 per cent).
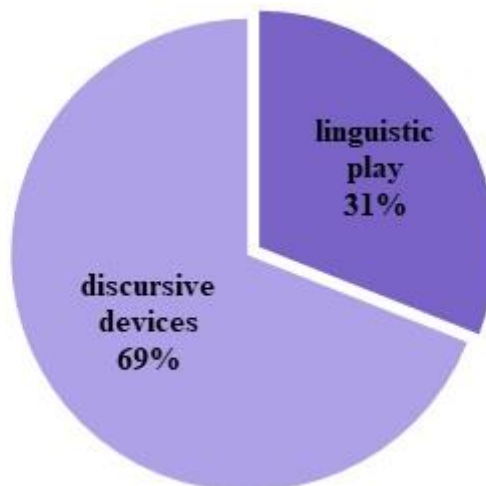
Figure 4. Humour devices in L2

As regards discursive devices, the L2 speakers' humour is mostly based on cases of incongruous images or situations (example 17) and of insinuation (cf. Table 1). As for linguistic play, the L2 speakers favour exaggeration (example 18) and the borrowing of French words, over play on words or play on the sounds of words (cf. Béal & Mullan 2013). Exaggeration may occur in the description of the scenes but also when quoting the characters in the extract. This has also been observed by Skogmyr Marian et al. (2017: 138) in speakers of French as a second

---

[8] Note that *complicity* in English usually implies involvement with others in an activity that is unlawful or morally wrong, whereas the French equivalent "*complicité*" can also be used to express an affinity or bond with another person, or to acknowledge a shared experience, not necessarily over a questionable activity. It is in this sense that we are using it here.

language with an elementary level, who use several devices such as phonological emphasis, reported speech and gestures to express exaggeration, even if their linguistic competence in L2 French is otherwise limited. On the other hand, Bell's study (2009: 250) evidences that "wordplay was far from common" and "play with phonology, completely absent".

(17)
```
    pop1a_38   i thought that the daughter was kind of funny to cook
               cookies because the only reason she does that is because
               it would smell it would smell cookies all over the place
               and that's why she does it and i didn't understand i
               (xxx) i'm not sure i understood this point in her
               reasoning
    INT        okay do you think that's something they do in france
               ((laughter))
    pop1a_38   no i don't think so ((laughter)) but maybe she wanted to
               hide a bad smell [so
    INT                          [((laughter)) may be]
    pop1a_38   why not] it could be a reason
    INT        okay
```

(18)
```
    INT        =alright what what did she [give to
    pop1a_53                              [.h she::] tells her that
               euuuh the everything's good with the dress but euuh she
               lets her daughter understand that euuh it's euh the::
               (.) euuh .h <((laughing)) we too much see her boobs [in
               fact]
    INT                                        <((laughing)) [okay]
               alright then)=
    pop1a_53   =it's mo:re euuh it's less direct in the:: scenes/ but
               =
    INT        =okay
    pop1a_53   it's the idea=
```

L1 speakers: the results for the native speakers confirm the marked preference of the English speakers for discursive devices. With only a small number of examples to draw from, we found no instance of linguistic play, therefore 100 per cent discursive devices (Figure 5).
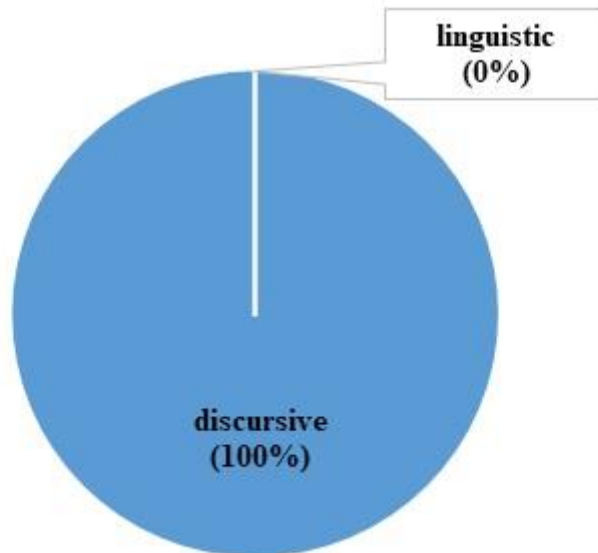
Figure 5. Humour devices in English L1

Probably for the same reason, the results for the French speakers were also lower than expected, with only 8 per cent showing some sort of linguistic play, all relying on exaggeration (Figure 6).
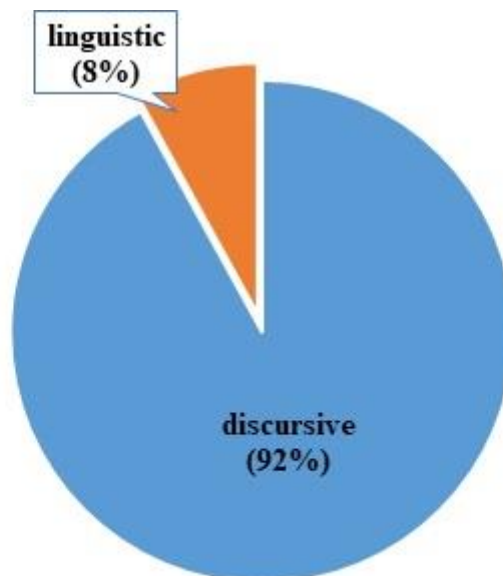
Figure 6. Humour devices in French L1

However, the percentage found for the L2 speakers of English matches that of the French speakers in a previous study containing a more representative number of examples: 35 per cent of linguistic play (against only 12 per cent for the English speakers – Béal & Mullan 2017a). In other words, the L2 speakers of English still have the same ratio of linguistic vs discursive strategies as they would if they were speaking French.

In the context of the interview about the film, the discursive strategies used by both the English and French native speakers build on the incongruities in the film extract[9] (example 19) and also include the beginning of fantasy scenarios (about what would happen next in the story, example 20).

(19)
```
pop1a_62   err i think she will go on a date and that'll be
           (laughter) err good and then she will go on a date the
           next day and that'll be good and don't know maybe
           [((laughter))
INT        [((laughter))
pop1a_62   like she'll be confused about which guy she likes and
           the mother will want to know everything that happened
           ((laughter))
INT        like a love triangle
pop1a_62   yeah proba[bly] ((laughter))
INT        ((laughter))
```

(20)
```
INT        et mais alors quelle pourrait être la suite de
           l'histoire à ton avis/
pop1a_50   euh ché pas elle va euh sortir elle va raconter à ses
           <((en riant)) elle va retourner> raconter son histoire à
           sa mère elle va (.) ché pas puis je pense qu'elle va
           finir avec un des deux garçons ou euh: ou alors elle va
           (xx) avec les deux je sais pas <((en riant)) et voilà>

INT        well so what do you think might happen next/
pop1a_50   err I dunno she's going to go out she's going to tell
           her <((laughing)) she's going to go back> to tell her
           Mum her story she is going to (.) I dunno and then I
           think she is going to end up with one of the two guys or
           er: or else she's going to go out with both I don't know
           <((laughing)) that's it>
```

The only other discursive device observed amongst the native speakers, especially the English speakers, is the use of self-deprecating comments already mentioned, which constitute a distortion of self-image meant to be amusing for the hearer.

4.3. Pragmatic/interpersonal functions of humour

Humour has several social functions, which Martineau (1972) details as being consensus, conflict, and control. More precisely, humour among friends can be divided into three categories: solidarity-based humour, humour to serve psychological needs, and power-based humour (Hay 2000). In the four-dimensional model (cf. Table 1) used for our study, we look at the three main features of the pragmatics of humour: creating a connection, promoting egalitarianism (making sure not to boast), and the managing of face concerns.

---

[9] The mother thinks her daughter is expecting a particular young man she has heard about, when in fact the daughter is expecting another man she has just met.

L2 speakers: creating a connection with the interviewer and with the film characters is the major pragmatic function of humour in our data (115 cases, i.e. 55 per cent) whereas face concerns are found in 73 cases (35 per cent) and making sure not to boast in 21 cases (10 per cent) (Figure 7).

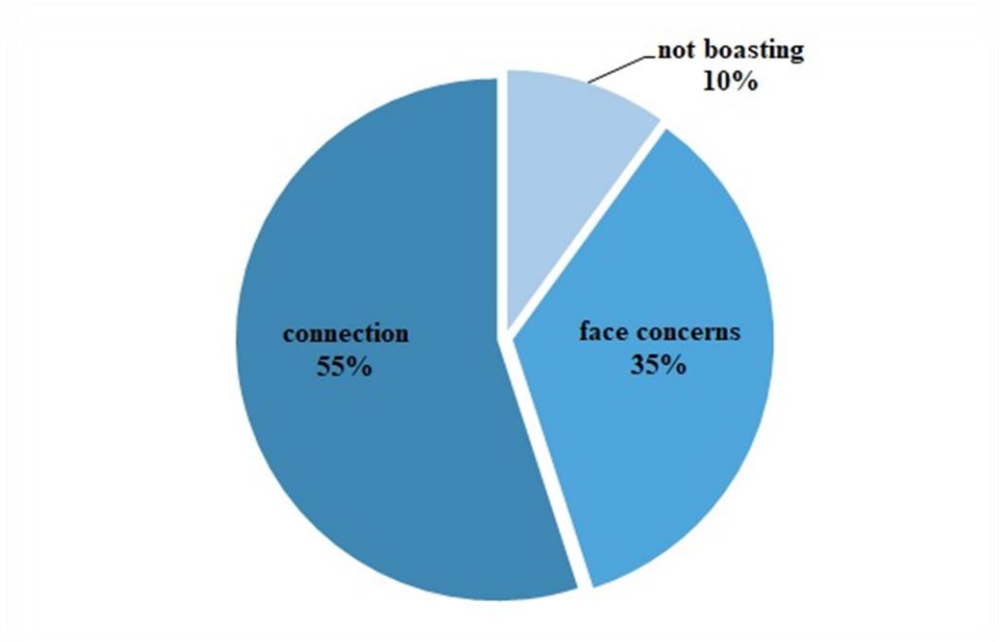Figure 7. Pragmatic/interpersonal functions of humour in L2

L1 speakers: in the context of the interview set up for our study, the pragmatic functions of humour are very similar to those observed in the L2 speakers. The main one is creating a connection between interviewer and interviewee and managing face concerns (Figures 8 and 9).
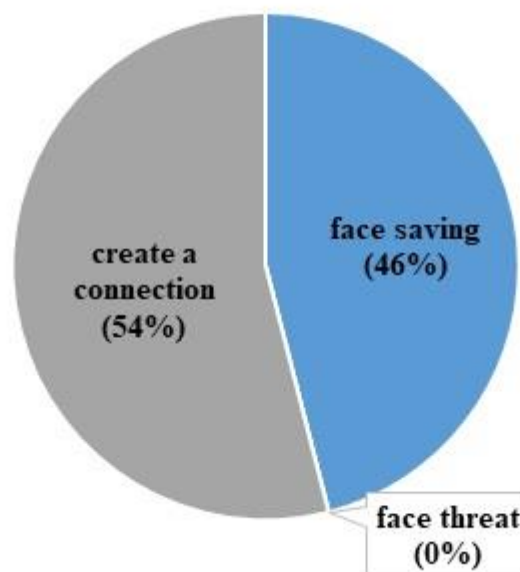
Figure 8. Pragmatic / interpersonal functions in English L1
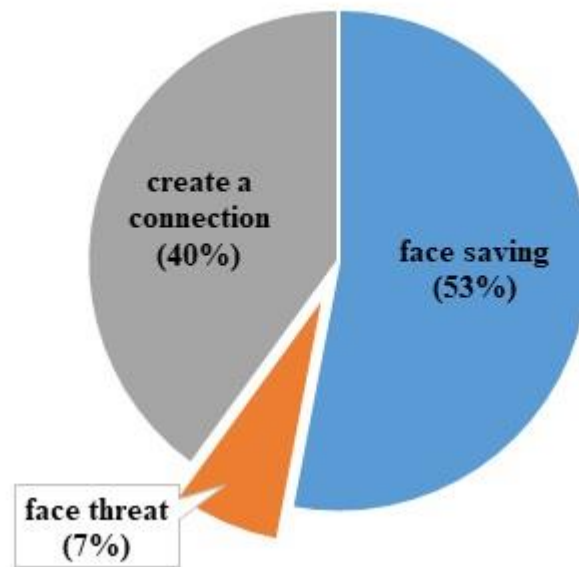
Figure 9. Pragmatic/interpersonal functions in French L1

As in Béal & Mullan (2017a), these pragmatic functions are to a large extent linked to the target of humour previously discussed: for example, the rapport (or "complicity") created between the participants is often achieved at the expense of a third party (here the kind of film, the scene or the characters depicted in it); self-oriented humour often fulfils face-saving strategies, and recipient-oriented humour often involves some kind of face threat.

4.3.1. Creating a connection

L2 speakers: we looked at the themes the L2 speakers used to establish a connection with the interviewer by using humour and we further examined the dyads' genders. The results (Table 2) show that the female L2 speakers' main topic for building a rapport is the character of the invasive mother in the film (example 21). The next topic is the type of film, which is referred to by the male and female L2 speakers equally. Interestingly enough, creating a bond based on not understanding a specific detail in the film extract is exclusively a female concern. Referring to personal experience comes next (example 22) and is mostly used by the female speakers. More generally, connection is largely triggered by the female L2 speakers (86 cases out of 115, i.e. 75 per cent).

Table 2. Connections and themes in L2 (INT = interviewer; POP = interviewee)

Themes	Male INT/ Male POP (4 dyads)	Female INT/ Male POP (7 dyads)	Male INT/ Female POP (7 dyads)	Female INT/ Female POP (15 dyads)	N
Invasive mother	0	3	13	16	32
Type of film	2	5	3	8	18
Claiming ignorance	0	0	9	8	17
Personal experience	0	3	2	9	14
Sexual innuendos	5	1	2	4	12
Value judgment about the daughter	4	1	1	3	9
Value judgment about the man	0	2	1	2	5
Society	0	2	0	1	3
Inability to understand or say something	1	0	0	2	3
Value judgment about INT	0	0	1	1	2
TOTAL	12	17	32	54	115

(21)
<u>Connection triggered by female L2 speakers (F INT / F POP)</u>

```
INT       ok/ and er so what do you think about the situation
          what's your opinion on that situation that that you saw
pop1a_31  ((laughs)) er <((laughing)) if I were milly> I would
          have put my mother out [<((laughing)) er k- kick ass>]
INT                                [((laughs out loud))]
pop1a_31  and [er                ]
INT            [<((laughing)) ok>]
pop1a_31  I wouldn't er have been er so much patient
INT       ok=
pop1a_31  =and er cool
```

(22)
<u>Connection triggered by female L2 speakers</u>

```
INT       who would you watch this film with
pop1a_38  generally i'd say girls and maybe my my friends my
          girlfriends
INT        ok yes maybe not with boys ((laughter))
pop1a_38  no of course not they wouldn't bear it ((laughter))
```

L1 speakers: in both corpora of native speakers, as for the L2 speakers, humour is used to create a strong connection between the interviewer and the interviewee. Judgement on the mother's behaviour, on the type of film, and elements of personal experience are the main topics (Table 3).

Table 3. Connections and themes in L1 (INT = interviewer; POP = interviewee)

Themes	Female INT/ Female POP L1 French (6 dyads)	Female INT/ Male POP L1 French (1 dyad)	Female INT/ Female POP L1 English (6 dyads)	Female INT/ Male POP L1 English (1 dyad)	N
Invasive mother	2	0	2	0	4
Type of film	1	0	2	0	3
Claiming ignorance	0	0	0	0	0
Personal experience	1	1	2	0	4
Sexual innuendos	0	0	0	0	0
Value judgment about the daughter	1	0	0	0	1
Value judgment about the man	0	0	0	0	0
Society	0	1	1	0	2
Inability to understand or say something	0	0	0	0	0
Value judgment about INT	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	5	2	7	0	14

The following two extracts (examples 23 and 24) are examples of humour based on personal experience:

(23)
```
INT        //oh she is baking cookies ok right
pop1a_62   yess: to make the house or the flat smell like cookies I
           guess it's a bit absurd ((laughter))
INT        ok that's funny/
pop1a_62   I don't think I'd have time to do that whilst getting
           ready having a job ((laughter))
```

(24)
```
pop1a_36   =oui après je trouve ça quand même assez cocasse quoi
           c'est vrai que .h c'est euh: ouais ça prête à sourire mais
           euh moi <((en riant)) personnellement ça me conviendrait
           pas> .h=
INT        =ta mère rentre euh <((en riant)) h>=
pop1a_36   =non non c'est pas ((rire))=

pop1a_36   =yeah I must admit I find it quite funny it's true that
           .h it's er: yeah it makes you smile but er <((laughing))
           personally I'd be somewhat annoyed> .h=
INT        =your mum barges in err <((laughing)) h>=
pop1a_36   =no no it's not((laughing))=
```

Furthermore, in both native speaker corpora, the interviewer can sometimes be seen to almost drop her role in order to co-construct a conversation on an equal basis with the interviewee. In the following example (25), it is the interviewer who takes the initiative of a humorous comment on the mother's attitude in the film script:

(25)
```
pop04      &[and but then she did when she gave her the necklace
           she was just thinking that she was going to see [the
           architect&
INT                                                        [yeah&
pop04      &[and then I think she was a bit upset well a bit put
           down that she was then going to wear this necklace to
           see somebody else=
INT        =okay yeah she might have wanted to grab it [back
           <((laughing))&>
```

The same occurs in the following French example (26) where the interviewer contributes an interpretation of the interviewee's response in the same way that a friend might add a comment in ordinary conversation. The interviewee, in turn, shows her appreciation of the contribution with a concluding "*voilà*", a typical pattern of French conversation (Béal 2010: 101-112).

(26)
```
INT        ouais] et euh: cette histoire de cookie euh: c'était
           pourquoi en fait euh
pop05      ((rires)) c'était juste pour l'odeur
INT        d'accord donc c'est plus pour le le jeu de la
           [séduction] peut-être d'accord
pop05      [voilà]

INT        [yeah] and er: that thing about the cookies what was
           that all about in fact
pop05      ((laughter)) it was just for the smell
INT        okay so it was more like a seduction [strategy] maybe
pop05                                           [you got it]
```

See also this extract from example 24 in which the interviewer follows up on the previous turn without a pause:

```
pop1a_36   <((en riant)) personnellement ça me conviendrait pas> .h=
INT        =ta mère rentre euh <((en riant)) h>=

pop1a_36   <((laughing)) personally I'd be somewhat annoyed> .h=
INT        =your mum barges in err <((laughing)) h>=
```

4.3.2. Face concerns

L2 speakers: in our data, face concerns represent another pragmatic function of importance. Humour can be used in self-defence to a perceived face threat (48 cases, i.e. 66 per cent), to threaten the interviewer's face (23 cases, i.e. 31 per cent), to repair a real or potential threat (2 cases, i.e. 3 per cent) (Figure 10).
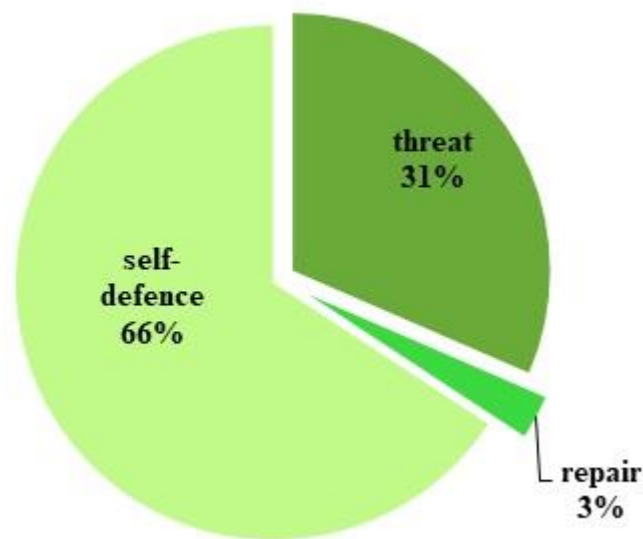
Figure 10. Face concerns in L2

Humour as self-defence occurs when the L2 speakers evidence language problems, for example when they haven't understood a passage of the film or the interviewer's question, or when they can't find the words in English. It also occurs when acknowledging they like the film although they consider it stupid. In that case, it has a face-saving function regarding comprehension or expression in L2 but also regarding their film preferences.

Although the cases of face threat represent 31 per cent of face concerns, only some of the L2 speakers actually perform a face threat (12 out of 34 speakers), 5 of them being particularly vigorous (example 27).

(27)
```
INT          so my next question was\ would you like to watch the rest
             of the [film/]
pop1a_56        [nope//]
INT          ((laughing)) okay\
pop1a_56     no/ I'm fine with that\
INT          alright\=
pop1a_56     =superfine\
INT          ((finishes laughing))
```

L1 speakers: humour used in self-defence or as a face threat is virtually absent from the two corpora of native speakers.

This seems directly linked to the context in which the verbal exchanges are taking place. It appears that the native speakers take this "experiment" in a relaxed fashion, and don't feel the pressure of being judged. The L2 speakers, on the other hand, know that their English proficiency is being tested, and the interviewer also sticks more strictly to the question/answer format. This may explain why humour used in self-defence (over language problems) is very present in the L2 interviews, as is humour as a face threat towards the recipient in a number of instances. Similar findings are outlined in Mullan (2020), where self-defensive humour was frequently used by French speakers in response to an interview question that had momentarily confused them, the humour also serving to buy them some time – either to think of an

appropriate answer, or to at least find something else to say. As pointed out by Béal & Mullan (2013), French speakers place great importance on their image and ability to respond quickly and wittily, as well as their ability to participate in any discussion, so it is not surprising that humour is used to save face in this way in the L2 data here.[10]

Recipient-oriented humour among L1 speakers is very rare in this context and mostly non-threatening. This is different from what was previously found for humour amongst friends in which personality teasing and opportunistic humour (sarcasm, mock-indignation, practical jokes…) are frequent (Béal & Mullan 2017a: 33-34).

4.4. Interactional dimension

L2 speakers: in our data, humour is usually initiated in response to a question. It occurs either in the second turn of an adjacency pair (Sacks et al. 1974) or in ensuing responses (example 28).

(28)
```
pop1a_30   and: she's- th- the girl looks very excited about it/
           and she wants (.) everything to be perfect and at at
           this time we imagine that (.) er:: (0.3) m: she: must
           er: that guy must be er:: (0.3) her husband or: i- it
           must be something really serious there must be something
           serious between both of them/=
INT        =yeah ok
pop1a_30   but she says that she er: what does she say/ (0.3) er:
           (0.5) that the the following evening she's going out
           with another guy who's taking her to the cinema or:
           drama I don't remember/
INT        m=
pop1a_30   =and then (.) er: we: understand that it's nothing about
           the big deal it's just a: a simple story with a guy and
           (.) the: the following evening she will see another one
           so: ok/ [then she:&
INT                        [=<((laughing)) ok:>]
pop1a_30                    &[yea she: she f- finally:(0.3) er:
           her mother finally goes=
```

L1 speakers: contrary to the L2 corpus in which humour usually occurs in a second turn as a response to a question by the interviewer, humour in the native speaker corpora occurs overwhelmingly in a first turn (around 80 per cent of cases in both French and English) as shown in Figures 11 and 12.

---

[10] Béal & Mullan (2017b) also found that the French speakers in these same corpora frequently tried to save face by giving excuses for why they hadn't understood something in the film extract (for example saying that they hadn't been able to see the object properly or that the extract didn't last long enough), thereby suggesting that "it wasn't their fault if they didn't understand" in an attempt to reduce the risk of appearing incompetent.
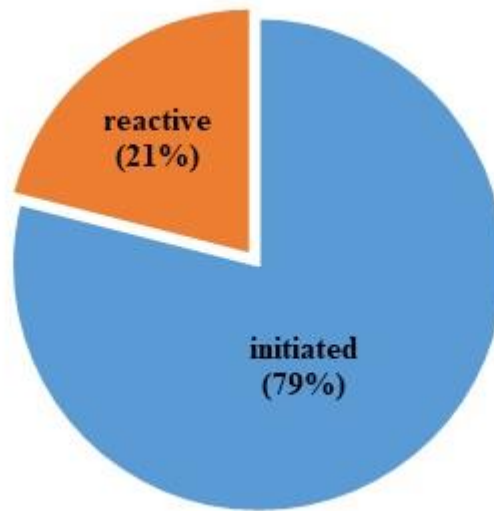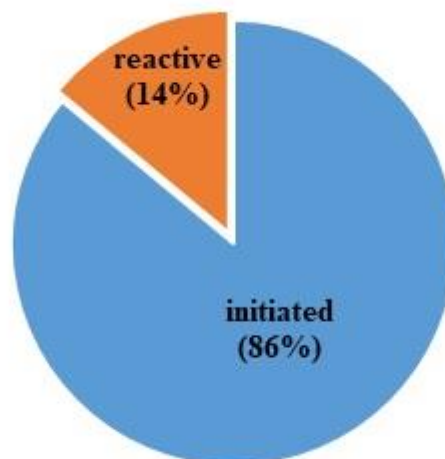
Figure 11. Interactional dimension in English L1

Figure 12. Interactional dimension in French L1

This means that both the interviewers and the interviewees frequently take the initiative of adopting a "non-serious" tone. This further confirms the observations made in the previous sections, showing that a more egalitarian and informal interpersonal relationship is established between the native speakers, where the level of language proficiency is not at stake, contrary to the L2 participants.

For example, in the following extract (example 29), the interviewer takes stock of the previous answer ("all right then ok") then starts a new exchange in a humorous tone with a comment about the pros and cons of cooking, and the interviewee agrees and joins in the laughter.

(29)
```
   pop1a_62   no just to make oh I don't know she might do ((give
              cookies to her guest)) but in the extract she doesn't
   INT        all right then ok it's a lot of work for making the
              house a mess ((laughter))
   pop1a_62   no I'd just get everything in a mess ((laughter))
```

In the following French extract of example 26 above, the interviewer uses an amused, slightly derisive tone in relation to part of the scene. The interviewee picks up on it, laughs and responds in the same tone.

```
   INT        [ouais] et euh: cette histoire de cookie euh: c'était
              pourquoi en fait euh
   pop05      (rires) c'était juste pour l'odeur

   INT        [yeah] and er: that thing about the cookies what was
              that all about in fact
   pop05      ((laughter)) it was just for the smell
```

5. Discussion

The results presented above show that humour is a challenge for L2 speakers even after many years of practice: even if they actually use some of the properties of English humour, they also display specific uses of their own and some aspects of English humour seem to remain out of reach for them.

5.1. Which properties of English humour do L2 speakers use?

From our data, the L2 speakers seem to come close to mastering typical features of English humour that are not prevalent in French:
-   when they mostly use discursive strategies, for example with incongruous images or situations and insinuation;
-   when they favour exaggeration as a linguistic device;
-   when, within an interactional sequence, they elicit a collaborative humorous scenario;
-   when humour is recipient-oriented, even if it remains infrequent.

Half of the instances of humour in the L2 speakers serve the purpose of creating a bond (or complicity) with the interviewer, with the feeling that the interview context could then become a spontaneous conversation.

5.2. What is specific to L2 speakers?

When considering the targets of humour, we can see that the L2 speakers still favour third-party oriented humour as usually done in French, and as evidenced in the L1 speakers of French in our corpora. If self-oriented, humour is used in a way that is typically French, making comments on their own speech, in order to mock language problems such as their lack of comprehension of the interviewer's questions and their own production difficulties.

As for the topics of humour, the L2 speakers seem to fall short of understanding some cultural features, such as the use of the smell of baking cookies as a seduction strategy.

Moreover, the study of the interactional dimension of humour shows that the L2 speakers do not often initiate humour sequences themselves, as if they did not consider themselves in an

egalitarian relationship with the interviewer, even though the interviewers are student counterparts, possibly because they feel that their language proficiency in English is somehow being tested. As a possible consequence, humour is sometimes used in a rather aggressive manner as a self-defence reaction to their own language and/or comprehension difficulties.

5.3. What is specific to L1 speakers that remains difficult for L2 speakers?

The set-up in which the interaction takes place and the topic imposed induce many common points between the L1 and L2 speakers (like the predominance of humorous comments about the situation depicted in the film extract).

However, even though the parameters for the interviews are objectively the same for all participants (viewing of the film extract followed by a semi-directive interview), the analysis shows that the L1 speakers seem to interpret the context of the interview in a different way from the L2 speakers. In other words, they seem to know that they are not the ones being tested. As a result, the interaction they co-construct is more collaborative and egalitarian than in a standard interview format. This, in turn, has an impact on their behaviour in relation to verbal humour. Recipient-oriented humour is used not to tease but to create rapport and to distance themselves from the experimental situation; humour used in self-defence and as a face threat is almost absent; and the interactional dynamic shows a merging of the roles of interviewer and interviewee with humour being frequently initiated by either one or the other.

6. Conclusion

This study examined humour in intercultural interactions (L1-L2) and comparable cross-cultural interactions (L1-L1) with research questions revolving around the differences observable in the type and use of humour in L1 vs L2 learner speech, and around L2 speakers' access to the features of humour in the target language. We also investigated whether L2 speakers would come close to previous findings on L1 humour in French and English (Béal & Mullan 2013; Béal & Mullan 2017a; Mullan & Béal 2018a).

Beyond the common features shared by the English L1 and the French L1 speakers, most of the specific cultural trends otherwise expected in each culture were nonetheless confirmed, namely, the higher proportion of third-party oriented humour in the French corpus and the importance of self-deprecating humour in the English one. The L2 English speakers' practice of verbal humour can be seen as going some of the way towards the target language, while still showing most of the characteristics of their native language.

Acknowledgements

References

Attardo, S. (2003). 'Introduction: the pragmatics of humor'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 35 (9), pp. 1287-1294.
Attardo, S., & Raskin, V. (1991). 'Script theory revis(it)ed: Joke similarity and joke representation model'. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* 4 (3-4), pp. 293-347.

Béal, C. (2010). *Les Interactions Quotidiennes en Français et en Anglais, de l'Approche Comparative à l'Analyse des Situations Interculturelles* [Everyday Interaction in French and English: From A Comparative Approach to An Analysis of Intercultural Encounters]. Peter Lang: Bern.

Béal, C. & Mullan, K. (2013). 'Issues in conversational humour from a cross-cultural perspective: Comparing French and Australian corpora', in Peeters, B., Mullan, K. & Béal, C. (eds.), *Cross-culturally Speaking, Speaking Cross-culturally*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 107-139.

Béal, C. & Mullan, K. (2017a). 'The pragmatics of conversational humour in social visits: French and Australian English'. *Language and Communication* 55, pp. 24-40.

Béal, C & Mullan, K. (2017b). 'La verbalisation du calcul interprétatif et de l'incertitude en français et en anglais : Approche comparative et interculturelle' [Explaining one's thought process and uncertainty in French and English: a comparative intercultural approach]. *Cahiers de Praxématique* 68. Special Issue, Gestion de l'implicite dans l'interaction orale en L2 [Managing the unsaid in L2 oral interaction: inferences and hypotheses].

Bell, N. (2002). Using and Understanding Humor in a Second Language: A Case Study. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

Bell, N. (2005). 'Exploring L2 language play as an aid to SLL: A case study of humor in NS–NNS interaction'. *Applied Linguistics* 26 (2), pp. 192-218.

Bell, N. (2009). 'Learning about and through humor in the second language classroom'. *Language Teaching Research* 13 (3), pp. 241-258.

Brown, P. & Levinson, C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Charaudeau, P. (2006). 'Des catégories pour l'humour ?' [Categorising humour?]. *Questions de Communication* 10, pp. 19-41.

Coates, J. (2007). 'Talk in a play frame: More on laughter and intimacy'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 39, pp. 29-49.

Cook, G. (2000). *Language Play, Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Craik, K. H., Lampert, M. D., & Nelson, A. J. (1996). 'Sense of humor and styles of everyday humorous conduct'. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* 9 (3-4), pp. 273-302.

Dynel, M. (2009). 'Beyond a joke: Types of conversational humour'. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 3 (5), pp. 1284-1299.

Dynel, M. (2011). 'Joker in the pack: Towards determining the status of humorous framing in conversations', in Dynel, M. (ed.), *The Pragmatics of Humour across Discourse Domains*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 217-241.

Dynel, M. (ed.). 2013. *Developments in Linguistic Humour Theory*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Fadel, S. A. & Al-Bargi, A. (2018). 'The use of humour in EFL classrooms: Comparative conversational analysis case study'. *Arab World English Journal* (AWEJ) 9 (2), pp. 262-282.

Ford, C.E. & Fox, B.A. (2010). 'Multiple practices for constructing laughables', in Barth-Weingarten, D., Reber E. & Selting M. (eds.), *Prosody in Interaction*, Amsterdam: Benjamins, pp. 339-368.

Goddard, C. (2006). '"Lift your game, Martina!": deadpan jocular irony and the ethnopragmatics of Australian English', in Goddard, C. (ed.), *Ethnopragmatics: Understanding Discourse in Cultural Context*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 65-97.

Haugh, M. (2011). 'Humour, face and im/politeness in getting acquainted', in Davies, B., Haugh, M. & Merrison, A.J. (eds.), *Situated Politeness*, London: Continuum, pp. 165-184.

Haugh, M. (2017). 'Mockery and (non-)seriousness in initial interactions amongst American and Australian speakers of English', in Carbaugh, D. (ed.), *The Handbook of Communication in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, New York: Routledge, pp. 104-117.

Haugh, M. & Bousfield, D. (2012). 'Mock impoliteness, jocular mockery and jocular abuse in Australian and British English'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 44, pp. 1099-1114.

Hay, J. (2000). 'Functions of humor in the conversations of men and women'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 32 (6), pp. 709-742.

Hay, J. (2001). 'The pragmatics of humor support'. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* 14 (1), pp. 55-82.

Holmes, J. & Marra, M. (2002). 'Over the edge? Subversive humor between colleagues and friends'. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* 15 (1), pp. 65-87.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni, C. (2005). *Le Discours en Interaction* [Discourse in Interaction]. Paris: Armand Colin.

Kim, S. & Park, S.-H. (2017). 'Humor in the language classroom: a review of the literature'. *Primary English Education* 23 (4), pp. 241-262.

Lampert, M. D. & Ervin-Tripp, S. M. (2006). 'Risky laughter: Teasing and self-directed joking among male and female friends'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 38, pp. 51-72.

Leslie, C. (2015). 'Humour in Peer Interaction in the L2 Classroom'. *E-TEALS: An e-journal of Teacher Education and Applied Language Studies* 6, pp. 51-67.

Martineau, W. H. (1972). 'A model of the social functions of humor', in Goldstein, J.H. & McGhee, P.E. (eds.), *The Psychology of Humor: Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Issues,* New York: Academic Press, pp. 101-125.

Milner Davis, J. (ed.), 2005. *Understanding Humour in Japan.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Milner Davis, J. & Chey, J. (eds.), (2013). *Humour in Chinese Life and Culture: Resistance and Control in Modern Times.* Hong Kong University Press.

Mullan, K. (2020). 'Humour in French and Australian English initial interactions'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 169, pp. 86-99.

Mullan, K. & Béal, C. (2018a). 'Conversational humour in French and Australian English: What makes an utterance (un)funny?'. Special issue: Conversational humour: forms, functions and practices across cultures, *Intercultural Pragmatics* 15 (4), pp. 457-485.

Mullan, K. & Béal, C. (2018b). Introduction: Conversational humor: Forms, functions and practices across cultures. Special Issue: Conversational humor: Forms, functions and practices across cultures. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 15 (4), pp. 451-456.

Norrick, N. & Chiaro, D. (eds.). (2009). *Humour in Interaction.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Partington, A. (2006). *The Linguistics of Laughter: A Corpus-Assisted Study of Laughter-Talk.* New York: Routledge.

Priego-Valverde, B. (2003). *L'Humour dans la Conversation Familière : Description et Analyse Linguistiques* [Humour in Casual Conversation: A Linguistic Description and Analysis]. Paris: l'Harmattan.

Rabatel, A. (2013). 'Humour et sous-énonciation (vs ironie et sur-énonciation)' [Humour and understatement (vs irony and exaggeration)]. *L'Information Grammaticale* 137, pp 36-42.

Raskin, V. (1985). *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor.* Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Raskin, V. (ed.). (2008). *The Primer of Humor Research.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Ross, A. (1998). *The Language of Humour.* New York: Routledge.

Sacks, H., Schegloff, E., & Jefferson, G. (1974). 'A simplest systematics for the organization of turn taking in conversation'. *Language* 50, pp. 696-735.

Sinkeviciute, V. (2017). 'Funniness and "the preferred reaction" to jocularity in Australian and British English: An analysis of interviewees' metapragmatic comments'. *Language and Communication* 55, pp. 41-54.

Sinkeviciute, V. & Dynel, M. (2017). 'Approaching conversational humour culturally: A survey of the emerging area of investigation'. *Language and Communication* 55, pp. 1-9.

Skogmyr Marian, K., Petitjean, C., & Pekarek Doehler, S. (2017). 'Le développement de la compétence d'interaction en langue seconde : État des lieux et illustrations empiriques' [Developing second language interactional competence: State of play and empirical evidence]. *Revue Française de Linguistique Appliquée* 42, pp. 127-145.

Vivero Garcia, M. D. (ed.) (2013). *Frontières de l'Humour* [Boundaries of Humour]. Paris: l'Harmattan.