Playful Creativity in TESOL: Toward Humor-Integrated Language Learning (HILL)

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Abstract

This manuscript is a conceptual article that intends to address 'playful creativity' as an under-explored but potentially insightful component of TESOL programs. To this aim, playful creativity is first defined under a critical purview of traditional and recent conceptualizations of creativity. Afterward, 'creative TESOL' is briefly addressed. 'Pedagogical humor' is next put forth as a practical outlet for playful creativity in language education. To further elaborate on (and operationalize) such creative TESOL, 'humor-integrated language learning' (HILL) is outlined. HILL is argued as an innovative pedagogical approach with far-reaching effects. The article anchors the contention for humorizing creative TESOL in a) the literature-informed benefits of pedagogical humor, b) new directions in creativity programs, and c) the criticality of creativity. Several instructional designs and a sample activity are also outlined to better familiarize readers with this approach. The paper finally addresses practical considerations and further developments in HILL within the framework of playful creative TESOL.

Keywords: Playful creativity; Humor; Playfulness; Creative TESOL; HILL; Innovative practices.

Creative pedagogy (CP) has singularly gained momentum in recent decades (see Cremin & Chappell, 2021 for a recent systematic review). Educational paradigms and systems, more often than not, put great emphasis on the development of learners' creative thinking skills (Dilekçi & Karatay, 2023). This surge in creativity programs is generally well-endorsed by the relevant scholarship (see Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021 for a recent review; also Anderson et al., 2022; Ata-Akturk & Sevimli-Celik, 2023). That is, by and large, creativity research indicates that creative interventions can indeed be conducive to higher indices of quality education (see e.g., Barabadi et al., 2022; Cho & Kim, 2018). Beyond the why question (i.e., the rationale behind CP), the educationists and teachers are currently more interested and involved in *how* to implement creative practices (Cremin & Chappell, 2021; Cropley, 2001; Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2021; Mullet et al., 2016). The implementation of creativity programs particularly in the intricate and diverse realm of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL,

henceforth) can be a mammoth challenge to macro-level policymakers as well as language teachers and learners (Carter, 2016; Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2021; Tin, 2016).

In this paper, this challenge is briefly addressed at both theoretical and practical levels. From a theoretical standpoint, readers are invited to reconsider the notion of creativity. What is creativity? This is a basic but fundamental question that can unfold new ways of enhancing learners 'creativity potential (see also Cropley, 2001; McLaren, 2020). To this aim, a critical overview of creativity is presented. The Four-C model is then elaborated on as a revised conceptualization and classification of creativity (see Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009, 2013). This, in turn, paves the ground for defining and defending playful creativity within TESOL. In particular, it lays the foundation for integrating pedagogical humor into (creative) TESOL (see also Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2021; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). Through the notion of humor-integrated language learning (HILL, henceforth), a practical outlet for playful creativity in language education is put forth.

From a practical perspective, pedagogical humor is underscored as an efficient way to be playfully creative while being on task. In other words, the paper contends that HILL can offer insights into how focus on form and fun may coincide within creative TESOL (see also Heidari-Shahreza, 2018a; Waring, 2013). In this respect, the article aims to address three major issues pertaining to humor and play within (creative) TESOL. Firstly, it levels criticism against the (intuition-based) assumption of humor as a trivial by-product of class interaction or metaphorically, a white elephant in the classroom (see also Bell, 2012; Heidari-Shahreza, 2022; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). It also criticizes the more negatively-loaded assumption, construing humor as a disruptive, off-task behavior that should be best avoided or suppressed (Cekaite & Aronsson, 2005; Heidari-Shahreza, 2023; Qin & Beauchemin, 2022). Secondly, readers are briefly updated on more than half a century of rigorous research on potential benefits of humor in educational settings (see also Banas et al., 2011; Heidari-Shahreza, 2021; Oshima, 2018). Thirdly, the paper attempts to provide a framework (i.e., HILL) to safeguard the use of humor as playful creativity in TESOL. This is, in fact, a major incentive for the article to espouse humor-integrated practices within TESOL (see Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020).

Thus, overall, it is posited that a) TESOL can benefit from *playful creativity* as a burgeoning fledgling of creativity research and pedagogy, and b) pedagogical humor, as in HILL, can serve as a pedagogical toolkit to implement playful creativity in TESOL.

Creativity: A Critical Perspective

Researchers usually find it notably difficult to define creativity or reach a consensus on how to classify it (Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2021; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). Creativity as a multifaceted construct and a thriving field of study is faced with a proliferation of competing theories which, at times, seem to be contradictory (Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021; Jones, 2016). Probably to readers' surprise, one can find more than 60 definitions of creativity in psychology alone (Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021). Despite epistemological disputes, most scholars generally agree upon that creativity contains and entails a combination of two core components: First, the novelty or originality (O) and second, task appropriateness (TA), usefulness or alternatively meaningfulness (Cropley, 2001; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). Yet, these two can, more often than not, be best judged upon within a particular historical (or socio-cultural) context. Hence, creativity (C) is, more recently, formulated as: $C = [O \times TA]_{Context}$. Based on this initial definition, numerous theoretical explorations of creativity have appeared in diverse fields of study. Among others, models and theories such as the Four P's (Rhodes, 1961) the Five A's (Glăveanu, 2013), the investment model of creativity (Sternberg & Lubart, 1991) and the

componental model of creativity (Amabile, 1996) have attempted to delineate the notion of creativity (see also Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019).

Toward the aim of this article and within the space limits, two foci of creativity research (i.e., big C/little c and Four-C) are touched upon to make connections with and expand on playful creativity in TESOL. Obviously, other conceptualizations of creativity can be discussed. Nevertheless, such in-depth treatment goes beyond the scope of this paper (see e.g., Cremin & Chappell, 2021; Jones, 2016 for more information). Without digressing from the main topic, putting these two classifications vis-à-vis each other can familiarize readers with the fluid and intricate nature of creativity and how humorous playfulness may be the right notion to be employed to aim for creative TESOL (see also Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2021).

Traditionally, creativity is categorized into big-C and little-c creativity (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). The first type is what is commonly considered as creativity and points to eminent, revolutionary innovations in science, art or industry. Nobel Prize winners can potentially be placed in such elite list of creators (see also Glăveanu, 2013; Helfand et al., 2016). Little-c creativity, in contrast, refers to minor innovative practices in everyday life such as adding new ingredients to a dish to make it more delicious or decorating a room innovatively (Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021; Cropley, 2001). This dichotomous conceptualization of creativity seems straightforward and perhaps serves well to sketch creativity as a vast and fluid construct. However, as Helfand et al. (2016, p. 18) point out "[b]ig-C and little-c are too wide to cover all the nuances of the creative process and how we assess creative value."

An alternative framework striving to cast light on dark areas of creativity is the Four-C model (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009, 2013). It puts forth two additional categories to bridge the gap, that is, 'mini-c' and 'Pro-c'. This model attempts to take into account the relative, accumulative nature of creativity. Mini-c creativity underlines the personal, internal, expressive and developmental aspects of creativity. It is viewed as a process of self-improvement and knowledge construction. Hence, mini-c may (and/or should) widely be observed in education where students build new knowledge based on exposure to instructional input (see also Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021; Cropley, 2001). Pro-c creativity can best be used to label creators including many academics who have not (yet) reached the level of prominence contextually expected to enter big-C nonpareil list (see also Cremin & Chappell, 2021).

In sum, the Four-C model outlines a developmental trajectory which begins with mini-c and possibly ends in big-C. Within such continuum, mini-c can be any act of learning proper, little-c refers to everyday problem-solving and creative practices, Pro-c involves innovative contributions by experts in a professional field and big-C is when creativity achieves worldwide accolade in a given field (Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021; see also Helfand et al., 2016 for a detailed elaboration of the stages and variables involved). Within the purview of the Four-C model of creativity, (second) language learning can be considered as mini-c creativity (Cho & Kim, 2018; Jones, 2016). Likewise, L2 learners may be viewed as mini-c creators who are developing their linguistic competence within the cline of creativity (Carter, 2016; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019; Tin, 2016). Epistemologically, this brings creativity and TESOL close to each other, offering many more ways to realize creative TESOL (see also Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2021). One potentially insightful and beneficial way to weld creativity into language education can be playful creativity (see Proyer et al., 2019). In the next section, I elaborate further on playful creativity (and playfulness) within TESOL.

Playful Creativity in TESOL

Playful creativity seems to be an under-explored avenue of research and practice in TESOL (Barabadi et al., 2022; Bell, 2012; Cho & Kim, 2018; Proyer et al., 2019). By definition, it

refers to breaking away from rules, patterns and conventions, adding fun to the ongoing task and being light-hearted (Cekaite & Aronsson, 2005; Cook, 2000; Heidari-Shahreza, 2018a). Proyer (2017, p. 114) conceptualizes playfulness as "an individual differences variable that allows people to frame or reframe everyday situations in a way such that they experience them as entertaining, and/or intellectually stimulating, and/or personally interesting." Playfulness is not disruptive, off-task behavior; it is, in essence, unconventionally appropriate behavior and a positively valued trait within Positive Psychology Movement (see e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). In other words, being playful requires approaching a task in *novel* but contextually appropriate and meaningful ways (see also Holmes et al., 2019). As mentioned earlier, this is, in fact, the core definition of creativity proper. While the precise interplay between creativity and playfulness is still a subject of heated debate, the relevant scholarship clearly indicates that playfulness can indeed inform and influence creativity and vice versa (see e.g., Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019; Proyer et al., 2019). Ontologically, playfulness is creative behavior in the guise of light-heartedness and humor (Bell, 2012; Cook, 2000; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2013). As McGhee (2010) reasons instigating a playful frame of mind makes it possible for creativity to mold into humor.

The positive correlation between humor and (playful) creativity has been confirmed in a number of studies with participants from different age groups and socio-cultural backgrounds (see e.g., Chang et al., 2015; Cho & Kim, 2018; Skalicky et al., 2022). Chen et al. (2019), for instance, delve deeply into why humor may enhance creativity from various viewpoints. They categorize the effectiveness of humor in creativity development into cognitive, emotional and motivational dimensions. In light of the relevant literature, Chen et al., (2019) conclude that, cognitively speaking, humor comprehension is a creative thinking process (see also Dilekçi & Karatay, 2023 and Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). Emotionally, it helps individuals to be better prepared for being creative "because humor indicates a relaxing and safe atmosphere, and frees individuals' imaginations" (pp.92-93) (see also Ata-Akturk & Sevimli-Celik, 2023; Heidari-Shahreza, 2018b; Martin & Ford, 2018). From a motivational perspective, humor adds greatly to feeling happy and this, in turn, can make learners feel self-motivated and willing to learn (i.e., intrinsic motivation) (see also Banas et al., 2011; Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Qin & Beauchemin, 2022).

In light of the Four-C model, such playfulness can be integrated into language learning as diverse manifestations of mini-c creativity (Helfand et al., 2016; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009; Proyer, 2017). This way, playfulness can be employed in different teaching paradigms and task types. For instance, 'focus on form' (FonF) and fun (i.e., FonF + F) can meaningfully be put together in TESOL (Bell, 2012; Heidari-Shahreza, 2018a, 2023; Prichard & Rucynski, 2022). Writing on the beneficial effects of playful creativity, Proyer et al., (2019) also point out Hugo Rahner's notion of 'Ernstheiterkeit' or 'serious-cheerfulness' (1948/2008). A window to such playful creativity within the context of language classroom can be *playful* language-related episodes (LREs). Swain and Lapkin originally (1998, p. 326) defined LREs as "any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others". Such incidental focus on form can incorporate (and be boosted by) a fun component (Cekaite & Aronsson, 2005; Deneire, 1995; Heidari-Shahreza, 2018a). That is, they could occur while the L2 learners are being playfully creative or *doing humor* (see also Heidari-Shahreza, 2021; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). Playful LREs, in essence, speak of a reciprocal relationship which can be conducive to higher degrees of playful creativity and attention to L2 input.

In this respect, Bell (2012) explored the differential effects of playful and non-playful focus on form by a group of ESL learners. She compared the learners' recall rate of the L2 forms which were attended to either seriously or playfully. Bell found that the students had a notably higher

recall of the target forms in the playful condition (see also Proyer et al., 2019 for a review of the relevant empirical studies in educational contexts).

Playful creativity is a potentiality which has been at teachers 'and material developers ' disposal. Nonetheless, it seems to be still in fetal stages (see also Anderson et al., 2022; Bell & Pomerantz, 2016). To put it differently, the serious business of teaching has, more often than not, frowned upon playfulness instead of investing in it as a type of creativity and an instructional asset (Ata-Akturk & Sevimli-Celik, 2023; Barabadi et al., 2022; Cropley, 2001; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2021). Metaphorically, playful creativity, particularly when it is under the façade of humor and funniness, seems to be still an ugly duckling in (language) education.

To find a place for playful creativity, a look at major approaches to creativity in TESOL can also be illuminating. Creativity in TESOL has chiefly been watered by creativity research in psychology (Carter, 2016; Cho & Kim, 2018; Jones, 2016). Broadly, two prominent approaches to creative TESOL can be identified in the relevant literature: Cognitive and social personality (Suzuki et al., 2022; see also Proyer et al., 2019). Creativity in the cognitive approach pivots on an individual's cognitive ability to generate new ideas, solve problems and adopt effective strategies (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). Such creativity principally calls for two major cognitive skills, namely, divergent thinking and convergent thinking. The former mainly refers to the ability to consider a given problem from different angles. Convergent thinking, in contrast, is manifested through singling out a solution among the available ideas and reaching the best decision (Carter, 2016; Glăveanu, 2013). Since the 1950s, psychologists have devised many measurement tools (e.g., Alternative Use Test, Remote Associate Test) to assess creativity as a cognitive construct (see also Cremin & Chappell, 2021).

Under the purview of the social-personality approach, creativity is the composite outcome of personality characteristics, motivational factors and socio-cultural conditions (Chen et al., 2019; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). Among diverse aspects of this type of creativity, the personality trait, 'openness to experience', seems to be a key factor. It can be briefly defined as a sense of curiosity, open-mindedness, and willingness to accept novel experiences (Anderson et al., 2022; Suzuki et al., 2022). Perhaps, of particular interest to the readers would be to point out that aesthetic sensibility is also one of the indicators of this personality dimension. This, in turn, may be reminiscent of the poetic or ludic function of language which can be categorized under the umbrella term of language play for fun or humorous language play (see also Cho & Kim, 2018; Cook, 2000 & Heidari-Shahreza, 2018 a, b).

Playfulness seems to share the key characteristics of creativity from a cognitive perspective (see Cremin & Chappell, 2021; Proyer, 2017). That is, as will be exemplified later, playfulness requires high levels of divergent and convergent thinking. Likewise, showing playful behavior essentially calls for the same personality traits (e.g., openness to experience) and socio-pragmatic prerequisites (see also Barabadi et al., 2022; Proyer et al., 2019). Thus, there seems to be a vast, shared ground between playfulness and creative practices in TESOL. As mentioned at the outset of the article, the major challenge, however, lies in the implementation of playful creativity in language education (i.e., the 'how' question) (see also Ata-Akturk & Sevimli-Celik, 2023; Cook, 2000; Heidari-Shahreza, 2021).

Based on a systematic review of creativity research, Alves-Oliveira et al. (2021) conclude that the relevant scholarship still lacks a full grasp of the current creativity programs in educational settings, and how effective they are. In other words, there are still uncharted waters in creative practices and educators still grapple with finding effective ways to operationalize creativity (see also Anderson et al., 2022; Cropley, 2001; Suzuki et al., 2022). In a recent study, Barabadi et al. (2022) explored the perceived functions of playful creativity (and playfulness) in TESOL settings. Their qualitative content analysis of EFL learners' self-reports unmasked four

categories of a) humor and laughter, b) creativity, c) mastery orientation and d) cultivating relationships as main domains of investment in playfulness. As also advocated by Alves-Oliveira et al. (2021), Barabadi et al. (2022) encourage researchers to put forth ways "for the translation of the adult playfulness construct from developmental and personality psychology and family relations into the second language acquisition (SLA) domain" (p. 1). The present conceptual article, in essence, strives to answer this call for practical outlets in TESOL by discussing a principled incorporation of humor for pedagogical purposes. The next section elaborates on diverse dimensions of such an approach.

Toward Humor-Integrated Language Learning (HILL)

Any successful implementation of creative TESOL or any innovation in creativity programs in language education begs the question of what is currently and commonly practiced as and for creativity in educational settings (see Anderson et al., 2022; Cropley, 2001). This question can serve as the departure point and equally the cornerstone for the incorporation of playful creativity in TESOL. Alves-Oliveira et al. (2021) extensively address this important issue in a systematic review of creative practices in education, covering a time span of 70 years. In their critique of the creativity interventions, Alves-Oliveira et al. (2021) found that (a) the most stimulated, frequent cognitive processing skills were idea generation, flexibility, idea evaluation, and conceptual combination, (b) the training techniques, most commonly employed in these creativity programs, were divergent thinking, expressive activities, and then elaboration of ideas, and (c) programmed instruction followed by discussion and cooperative learning were the top delivery media.

Based on the insights this review offers, there seems to exist a vast common ground between the general framework of creativity programs and what pedagogical humor espouses (see also Anderson et al., 2022; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2021; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). Such affinity can be discerned at both theoretical and practical levels.

HILL: Theoretical Perspective

Theoretically, the cognitive strategies involved in creativity and the techniques used in the relevant programs tally closely with those of humor and language play for fun (see also Chen et al., 2019; Cho & Kim, 2018). Beghetto (2019), in this respect, identifies three forms of creative teaching: teaching about creativity, for creativity and with creativity. He contends that humor shares the key features of creative activities (e.g., divergent thinking) and can be employed in teaching for creativity within different academic subject areas (e.g., math, science, language) in K12 or higher education contexts (see also Mullet et al., 2016). Beghetto puts forth a process model which pivots on components such as uncertainty (e.g., information gap, non-routine processes) and individuals 'humor styles (e.g., affiliative, aggressive) (see also Heidari-Shahreza, 2018c; Martin & Ford, 2018). This article also argues that HILL can have the potential to be used for teaching *with* and *about* creativity, as well.

From the vantage point of humor scholarship, humor-creativity interplay may also be perceived. In this respect, the incongruity-resolution theory of humor and the general theory of verbal humor are defensibly (among) the most accredited theories of humor in psychology and linguistics respectively (Attardo, 2020; Chen et al., 2019; Martin & Ford, 2018). Despite superficial differences, they both account for humor principally based on the appreciation of two *incompatible semantic scripts*. This, in essence, calls for the same cognitive processes involved in creativity such as idea evaluation, divergent thinking, and conceptual combination (see Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021; Chang et al., 2015; Martin & Ford, 2018). To clarify further, consider the joke below:

Student 1: "The dean announced that he is going to stop drinking on campus."

Student 2: "No kidding! Next thing you know he'll want us to stop drinking too." (from Deneire, 1995, p. 290)

The humorous effect of this instance of humor depends on the successful recognition and resolution of the mismatch between the semantic script (or simply, the interpretation) the first student brings about and that of the second student (see Attardo, 2020; Heidari-Shahreza, 2018c). In playful creativity terms, the joke instigates a play frame through which readers are creatively and playfully led down a 'garden path' and laugh at the punch line when they come to a second contextually appropriate rendering of the situation.

The association made above can also be discerned from the perspective of playful creativity research. For instance, Guitard et al. (2005) recognize sense of humor as one of the five core components of playful creativity. Likewise, McGhee (2010) construes humor as a *variant of play* (i.e., play with ideas). He contends that playfulness is inherent to having a sense of humor (see also Proyer, 2018 for a detailed discussion of the reciprocal relationship between humor and playfulness). Reminiscent of humorous language play, Carter (2016) states "[c]reativity functions to give pleasure…to express identities and to evoke fictional worlds which are recreational and which re-create the familiar world in new ways" (p. 82).

HILL: Practical Perspective

A second aspect of the possible connections between HILL and creativity programs concerns instructional design and methodology. As Richards (2013) states three curriculum approaches and instructional designs can largely be assumed: Backward, central and forward (see Figure 1). While playful creativity can be put into practice through any of these approaches, the backward design has the notable advantage of planning before practicing (Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2023). This foresight may aid in the fine-grained adaptation and integration of English language teaching (ELT) materials for playful creativity. It also lowers the chance of sidetracking the instruction into mere funniness and triviality (see Barabadi et al., 2022; Cook, 2000; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). Hence, HILL primarily advocates a backward design, starting from the end by identifying the instructional goals, the process and then the content (see Heidari-Shahreza, 2020 for more information and relevant examples; also Bell & Pomerantz, 2016). It should be noted that 'programmed instruction' in creative education also follows the same blueprint in practice (see Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021).
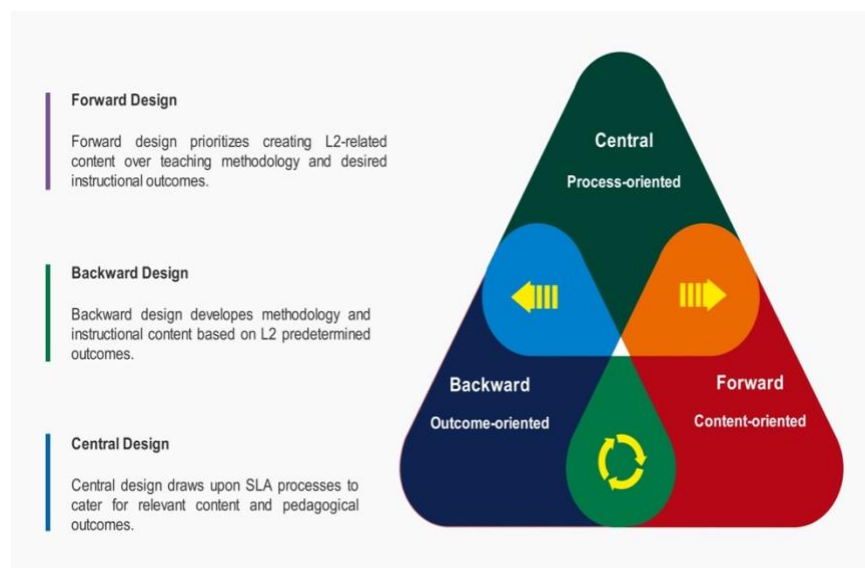
Figure 1. Major instructional designs in HILL (based on Richards, 2013)

Based on a backward design and in light of the relevant literature (see e.g., Bell and Pomerantz, 2016; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020), the instructional cycle of HILL includes four stages of a) determining pedagogical outcomes, b) identifying indices of attainment, c) developing humor-based materials and, d) designing actual instruction (see Figure 2 for more information). HILL attempts to employ pedagogical humor in a systematic, disciplined manner, optimizing its embodiment into the instructional/curriculum framework of a given learning context (see also Chen et al., 2019; Heidari-Shahreza, 2021, 2023). A sample activity is provided below to make readers more familiar with the operational aspects of HILL.
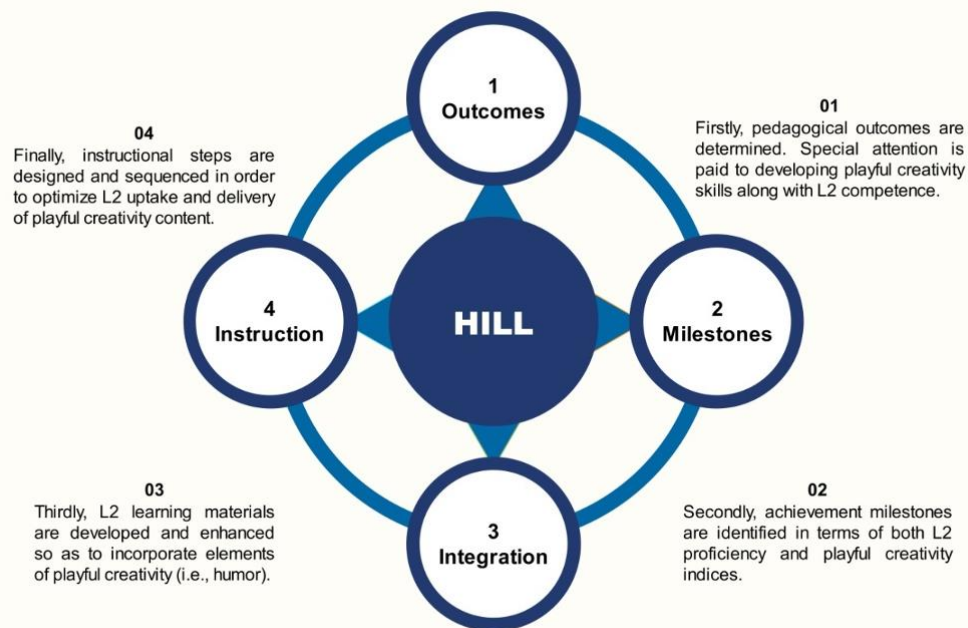
Figure 2. HILL's instructional cycle within the framework of playful creativity

HILL Sample Activity

The sample activity below exemplifies further the steps, procedures and practical considerations of this approach to playful creativity. This activity hinges on a short sitcom or situation comedy adapted from the English series, *Top Notch* by Saslow and Ascher (2010). In the activity, 'getting and giving directions in English 'using imperative sentences, the prepositions of place, the vocabulary related to different places in a town (e.g., post office, restaurant, bank) and directions (e.g., right, left, straight, around the corner) are major syntactic and lexical targets of the L2 language dimension. Getting familiar with 'situational irony ' within situation comedy, recognizing a play frame and responding to sarcastic remarks appropriately in communication serve as the main instructional objectives of the L2 humor dimension (see also Appendix A for the sitcom synopsis and transcript). Furthermore, storyboarding, (reverse) brainstorming, roleplaying, five WH questions, mind mapping, drawing humorous emojis and memes are among the playful creativity strategies in this exercise. Here are the stages involved based on a backward instruction design:

Stage 1: Instructional Objectives

The instructional objectives or pedagogical outcomes of this sample activity pivot on three dimensions of L2 language, L2 humor and playful creativity with an overriding focus on English as a second/foreign language. The specific goals are as follows:

L2 Language Dimension

- Teaching learners how to get and give directions.
- Making learners familiar with different places in a town (e.g., bank, hotel, park).
- Teaching learners how to use target prepositions of place correctly.
- Teaching learners how to take notes while listening.
- Teaching learners how to start and end a formal conversation with a stranger.

L2 Humor Dimension

- Making learners familiar with situation comedy.
- Making learners familiar with irony of situation.
- Teaching learners how to recognize the contextual cues of sarcasm.
- Teaching learners how to respond to sarcastic utterances appropriately.

Playful Creativity Dimension

- Developing free thinking skills (e.g., brainstorming, negative brainstorming)
- Developing convergent and divergent thinking strategies (e.g., discussion, five WH questions, mind mapping)
- Enhancing learners' openness to experience (e.g., role-playing, group work)
- Developing metaphorical thinking (e.g., drawing emojis, sarcastic expressions)

Stage 2: Achievement Milestones

As the second stage in the instructional design of this HILL activity, the following milestones are discerned based on the pedagogical outcomes.

L2 Language Dimension

- Learners will use 'verb (+ object)' to make imperative sentences.
- Learners will use "I'm looking for…" in their role plays.
- Learners will use vocabulary related to locations in a town (e.g., bank, hotel, post office) in their role plays.
- Learners will use politeness strategies to respond to sarcastic expressions.
- Learners will use prepositions of place properly.

L2 Humor Dimension

- Learners will be able to define situation comedy and identify a play frame.
- Learners will be able to notice the contextual (verbal) cues and conversational turns which add to the humorous effect of the situation.
- Learners will distinguish literal meaning from ironical meaning.
- Learners will use irony to mitigate the perlocutionary force of an utterance.

Stage 3: Humor Integration Materials

The third stage pertains to the planning and preparation of the relevant instructional content (see also Appendix B for sample materials).

- A sitcom video clip as described above.
- Maps of town (different versions)
- Small-size flash cards of locations in a town
- Sample storyboards/comic strips
- Sets of emojis and memes
- Sets of animation characters (Sponge Bob, Square Pants, The Smurphs)

Stage 4: Instruction Procedure

The final stage details the lesson plan and the stepwise procedure of implementing this HILL activity.

- After a short warm-up, the teacher asks the students to form groups of 3-4. Each group is given a pack of small flash cards which contain the name and the picture of different locations in a town (e.g., hospital, hotel, bank). A map of town with empty places to stick locations is also given to them.
- The teacher asks learners (in each group) to choose one location and stick it somewhere of their choice on the map.
- They are then instructed 'to build the town' around that location. That is, they should add other locations to the map. They are also asked to add two places which do not match the town (i.e., irrelevant or unnecessary for their maps).
- Groups connect a list of directions with a set of small pictures indicating different directions (e.g., turn around the corner, go straight).
- They, then, practice (in their groups) asking for and giving directions for different places on their maps. Diverse roles are assumed in the respective role plays.
- The teacher, next, asks the students to watch the sitcom video for the first time.
- They watch the video for a second time and then work together in their groups to 'rebuild the town' (adding or renaming locations) based on the video. They then mark the directions Paul (the sitcom character) gives to the stranger.
- Teacher encourages learners to think of what happened against their predictions in the video.
- The learners are asked to identify the contextual verbal cues which finally led to the intended humor. The class discusses the cues (e.g., change in intonation contour, prosody, marked vocabulary) and makes a list.
- They discuss what Bob's sarcastic remark at the end of the video means (particularly, its phonological, discursive and communicative aspects).
- Teacher asks if there is anyone who has not found the video humorous. This focus on 'failed humor' creates an opportunity to enhance the learners' L2 pragmatic awareness and communicative competence.
- The teacher asks groups (or individual students) to make a storyboard/comic strip with 3-5 boxes with a similar scenario (as in the sitcom) and different places. They are asked to draw stick figures with big, round heads and balloons for the conversation lines. This, in practice, encourages L2 learners to employ L2 pragmatic and discursive strategies to create effective communication. It also enhances their linguistic creativity and playfulness.
- Teacher gives out a pack of emojis (e.g., happy, confused, ashamed, winking) to each group. The students should stick them (as appropriate) to the stick figures. It is an opportunity to focus on extra-linguistic features of L2 communication, enhance L2 learners' emotional creativity.
- Learners are asked to 'act out the scenario'. In each group, student A asks for a location (the stranger's role), student B gives directions (Paul's role), and student C and D predict in advance the directions and put a 'bomb' mark where they wish on the road. When B is finished giving directions, C (Mary's role) whispers into B's ear either 'you did it' or 'you explo did it' (i.e., you exploded it). Student D (Bob's role) comments on B's giving address sarcastically or sincerely based on the bomb success or failure.
- Next, the students in each group create another similar scenario but this time using animation characters (SpongeBob, Square Pants or The Smurphs). Each group then

writes a short summary of their scenario (in simple past/present tense) with implicit hints about the characters used. The scenarios are exchanged among the groups. Each group, based on the summary, should guess which characters are used for which roles (e.g., SpongeBob for Paul's role).

- The class then goes to the next activity.

It is worth underscoring that practical ideas to incorporate humor (as playful creativity) into TESOL abound, being limited to teachers 'creativity, contextual constraints and educational norms (see also Anderson et al., 2022; Heidari-Shahreza, 2021; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). In addition, to serve as both an example and a template for similar activities, this activity is inevitably *decontextualized*. In other words, further details or modifications may be applied to the educational content, materials sequence and procedure descriptions to meet the needs of different learners and language settings (e.g., level of L2 proficiency, age, cognitive readiness, time constraints, curricular priorities, etc.) (see also Beghetto, 2019; Heidari-Shahreza, 2023).

HILL Practical Guidelines and Considerations

The preparation and integration of humorous instructional content (e.g., funny stories, cartoons, comic strips, funny videos) may initially seem time-consuming, costly, or demanding to language teachers and ELT materials developers. However, being creative (particularly being playful and humorous) principally entails *working smart by thinking outside the box* rather than working hard, burning the midnight oil to get prepared for HILL. As mentioned earlier, humor is chiefly language-based or verbal (Attardo, 2020). It is also ubiquitous and, thanks to new technologies, conveniently accessible. More importantly, in many cases, it can be argued that, ELT materials, currently being used by teachers, can often serve playful creativity, as well (see Cook, 2000; Deneire, 1995; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2021; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). Thus, language teachers should, for the most part, remember to, metaphorically, *add to the shopping cart* what makes their teaching orientation and delivery playfully creative (or humor-integrated). Moreover, once fully integrated into TESOL curriculum, the progress along HILL and keeping it on track would be feasible (see also Beghetto, 2019; Cremin & Chappell, 2021; Heidari-Shahreza, 2023). Additionally, a wide range of strategies can be put forth for busy teachers, if needed.

For instance, there is a wealth of online ELT resources which can feasibly cater for diverse needs of L2 learners and teachers. Such digital content also contains or can be modified to contain the elements of playful creativity. Likewise, thanks to recent artificial intelligence (AI) affordances, ELT materials development and adaptation are more teacher-friendly. For example, 'Playground AI' is an AI-enhanced editing platform that creates and composes images for playful purposes. Language teachers, hence, can conveniently turn their simple line drawings into editable online animations to be employed for comic strips, games, role-plays, avatars, storyboards, etc. (see also Heidari-Shahreza, 2023; Zhang & Zou, 2022).

Furthermore, as one may note in the sample activity above, the key characteristics of widely-practiced educational paradigms such as communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based language teaching (TBLT), student-centered learning (SCL), positive education (PE), cooperative language learning (CLL), content-based instruction (CBI), and project/problem-based learning (PBL) can be identified or may feasibly be included in HILL (see also Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021; Cropley, 2001). Along the same lines, there is room for innovative teaching practices such as technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) and closely-related approaches such as computer-assisted language learning (CALL), mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), gamification and digital game-based learning (DGBL), blended learning, and flipped learning (Ata-Akturk & Sevimli-Celik, 2023; Prichard & Rucynski, 2022). This, in turn, speaks of the high compatibility and adaptability inherent to pedagogical humor as

playful creativity. Thus, metaphorically, to be on the HILL bandwagon, there is no need to get off or shift track from major teaching approaches (Banas et al., 2011, Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Cook, 2000; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2023).

Similarly, it should be noted that humor as conceptualized in playful humor-integrated approaches to (language) education does not necessarily contain or entail laughing out loud. Pedagogical humor, by definition, hinges on the novelty of expression, playful atmosphere and creative use of materials (Beghetto, 2019; Cook, 2000; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). That is, laughter is only a common, accompanying contextual cue but not a defining feature (Attardo, 2020; Martin & Ford, 2018). Likewise, the instructional content employed in HILL can be serious; the treatment of the content and teaching delivery, however, may render it humorous. In other words, being playfully creative in language classroom is not only a matter of 'what to teach 'but also 'how to teach '(Barabadi et al., 2022; Bell, 2012; Proyer, 2018; Proyer et al., 2019). This point, in turn, hints at the notion of *humor literacy* (and also play literacy) which, among other issues, will be addressed in the next section (see also Heidari-Shahreza, 2021; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020).

Moreover, the sociocultural and educational norms of language settings should be heeded in the application of instructional humor. Otherwise, it can be ineffective or even counter-effective (Heidari-Shahreza, 2023; Oshima, 2018; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). This also applies to the initial conceptualization of humor. It should be noted that cultural differences can play a role in the conceptualization of playful creativity, refuting a 'one-size-fits-all ' framework of being creative or doing humor (Amabile, 1996; Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2021; Helfand et al., 2016). For instance, Western conception of creativity seems to be more product-oriented while its Eastern counterpart (e.g., Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism) tends to value *process*, self-improvement and enlightenment. That said, there are principles and techniques that can safely be used within a systematic, literature-informed use of humor in creative TESOL (see Beghetto, 2019; Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Chen et al., 2019; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020)

It should also be added that being L2 learners and having, at times, a wavering L2 proficiency do not necessarily put such learners at disadvantage. Rather, playful creativity programs in TESOL (e.g., HILL) can still be employed in full range (see also Barabadi et al., 2022; Proyer et al., 2019; Waring, 2013). Interestingly, there exists empirical evidence that L2 learners can even outperform their L1 counterparts in certain aspects of creativity. In this regard, Skalicky et al. (2022) compared the linguistic creativity of L1 and L2 English speakers in generating novel (humorous) equivalents for a list of target words. They observed that the answers given by L2 learners were less homogenous or alternatively, more original and diverse. They concluded that L2 participants probably enjoyed "a wider search field" (p. 1975). They further mentioned that, while it is not necessarily indicative of higher creativity on the part of the L2 learners, it may well imply "fundamental differences in the storage and use of L1/L2 language knowledge." This, in turn, may particularly be useful to L2 learners within the context of creative TESOL programs (see also Chang et al., 2015; Cremin & Chappell, 2021; Heidari-Shahreza, 2018b).

Humorizing TESOL: The Big Picture

This section mainly discusses why a humor-integrated approach to playful creativity in TESOL can be beneficial. The discussion is brought to the fore with an eye to a) the beneficial effects of pedagogical humor as documented in the relevant scholarship b) recent paradigmatic shifts in creativity research focusing more on creative persons and practices, and c) the criticality of creativity or how playfulness and humor can push TESOL toward 'liberation pedagogy' within critical pedagogy. In this respect, the paper highlights the potential contribution of humor to a

more humanistic and authentic learning context. Hence, it is argued that humorizing TESOL can be an effective way of humanizing (creative) TESOL (see also Giroux, 2021; Heidari-Shahreza, 2022; Qin & Beauchemin, 2022).

Pedagogical Benefits of HILL

There is growing evidence that humor in education can indeed be conducive to significant pedagogical benefits (see e.g., Banas et al., 2011; Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Cook, 2000; Heidari-Shahreza, 2021, 2022; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020, 2022, Qin & Beauchemin, 2022, to name a few). Pedagogical humor, among other things, may (a) be an important emotional booster, brightening class atmosphere and contributing to class positive interdependence (b) enhance students 'creative and critical thinking skills, enabling them to experiment with new ideas and identities (c) reduce avoidance behaviors, lowering affective filters and emotional exhaustion of teachers and learners, and also (d) increase class engagement and enjoyment, improving teacher efficacy, learning gains and recall rates.

Being a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary concept, humor can also be considered as a significant, moderating factor in a plethora of educational topics. Hence, besides the above practice-oriented benefits, humor can inform and influence educational theory and research. 'Teacher burnout', for instance, is a fruitful avenue of educational research within which humor can be discussed as a coping strategy and a defense mechanism (see Heidari-Shahreza, 2022; Martin & Ford, 2018). In this respect, Pressley (2021) addresses the surge of teacher burnout during COVID-19 pandemic. He emphasizes that teachers (and of course, students) should receive emotional support in these challenging times and "district and school administrators need to provide supportive environments and instructional guidance to teachers in order to ease anxiety around instruction" (p. 327). The relevant literature indicates that humor may particularly be helpful to grapple with this wide-spread issue (see also Barabadi et al., 2022; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2022; Qin & Beauchemin, 2022).

Cook (2000) also advocates playfulness (particularly language play for fun) in L2 learning settings. He reasons that this can greatly contribute to a state of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). That is, humor can help learners have an 'optimal learning experience' through full engagement and enjoyment (Proyer, 2018; Waring, 2013). Similarly, as Dörnyei (2001) argues pedagogical humor makes "learning stimulating and enjoyable for the learner by increasing the attractiveness of the tasks" (p. 141).

From Creativity to Creativeness

Besides the above-mentioned benefits, humor-integrated approaches have the potential to be employed for TESOL as a coherent set of *creative practices*. Likewise, such approaches can empower language teachers and students as *creative persons*. As a brief background to this important issue, it should be said that there seems to be a paradigmatic shift in creativity research and. That is, creativity scholars put recently more emphasis on '*creativeness*' than 'creativity' (see Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021; Cremin & Chappell, 2021; Chen et al., 2019; Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2021; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019; also, Cropley, 2001). Highlighting the continuity of creative potential (in all students), Runco (2014), for example, asserts that "[t]he best approach [in creative pedagogy] may be to completely avoid the noun, *creativity*, and instead only use the adjective, *creative*." (p. 132). Likewise, Alves-Oliveira et al. (2021) found that creativity programs comparatively pay less attention to creative processes. They argue that "creativity should be seen as a *practice* and that it will be important to establish new ways to measure success during the *practice of creativity*" (p. 19). Along the same lines, Tin (2016) also underscores the notion of creative persons and practices in TESOL. She asserts "language learning tasks should be set up to instigate *a creative desire* [emphasis added] in

language learners, creating a need to say something new so as to help them explore and transform their second-language knowledge and their knowledge about the world" (p. 433). Prioritizing creative process rather than any eminent product thereof potentially lends a hand in realizing *inclusive education.* It may make more room for creativity as a potential latent in *all* individuals, unbridling this notion from a product-oriented, exceptional talent (see Cremin & Chappell, 2021; McLaren, 2020; Suzuki et al., 2022).

Within applied linguistics and language education, the recommendation to put more emphasis on creative persons and practices may be translated into more focus on *teaching with and about humor* (Beghetto, 2019; Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020). As mentioned earlier, humor, by definition, is a creative practice that, through having a sense of humor, speaks of a creative person. Incorporating humor into TESOL may serve the double purpose of enhancing learners 'linguistic competence as well as their (L2) humor literacy (Oshima, 2018; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). The contention, *humor as and for language learning* has already been endorsed in TESOL (see Bell, 2012; Cook, 2000; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2021). It seems well-rooted in and well-justified by communicative approaches to language education, too (Cekaite & Aronsson, 2005; Suzuki et al., 2022; Tin, 2016; Waring, 2013). TESOL today principally hinges on the notion of language as a means of communication. A growing body of research suggests that communicative competence requires sufficient familiarity with L2 humor (see Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2021; Oshima, 2018; Prichard & Rucynski 2020, Proyer et al., 2019). This mutual relationship can also be confirmed by the verbal basis and social venue of many forms of humor such as puns, jokes, funny stories, comedies (Attardo, 2020; Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Chen et al., 2019). Therefore, humor literacy should be heeded within the gestalt of language pedagogy particularly considering the increasing need for intercultural fluency and *education for global citizenship*, as advocated by UNESCO 2030 Roadmap (see also Dilekçi & Karatay, 2023; Giroux, 2021; Heidari-Shahreza, 2023).

Teaching about humor (besides teaching with) is also supported by creativity research. Broadly, the existing scholarship indicates that humor training can, in fact, enhance students ' creativity indices (see e.g., Barabadi et al., 2022; Beghetto, 2019; Proyer et al., 2019). Chen et al. (2019) reported on a quasi-experimental study to evaluate the effects of a 30-36 hours humor training program on a group of undergraduate students. The results revealed significant improvement in the experimental group's sense of humor and creative thinking indices (e.g., verbal fluency, figure originality). In the follow-up interviews, the majority of the participants asserted that "the training course made their thinking and behavior more open and more creative and were more curious about all things than before (p. 97)" (see also Beghetto, 2019; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020, 2022). It is worth mentioning that in the sample HILL activity, teaching with and about humor are both aimed for.

Liberating TESOL through HILL

Humorizing creative TESOL can also be construed as resistance and subversive practice (see also Qin & Beauchemin, 2022). As Ollerhead and Burns (2016) argue "[m]any language teachers have to operate within considerable educational constraints, controlled by rapidly-changing and top-down ministry policies, mandated curricula, prescribed materials, pre-specified outcomes" (p. 227). Hence, in many language settings, little room is actually allowed for creative teaching practices and creative persons (Cremin & Chappell, 2021; Cropley, 2001). Nevertheless, at the micro-level, teachers may create their own creativity-based community of practice and incorporate more creative practices in their profession (Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021; Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2021; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). Humor-integrated approaches may serve as an example of such intention. Humor and language play can also set language learning free from the orthodoxies of ELT materials development (Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Giroux,

2021; Qin & Beauchemin, 2022). As Cook (2000) in his seminal work, *language play, language learning,* argues the topics common in authentic humorous language play (e.g., politics, religion, violence) and the type of focus on form inherent to it are not generally invested in the ELT coursebooks (see also Cho & Kim, 2018; Guitard et al., 2005; Holmes et al., 2019).

From the vantage point of critical pedagogy, under the mask of humor, L2 learners are also able to question the class, teacher, and/or educational norms, adopt new identities and safely express their feelings and emotions (see Giroux, 2021; Heidari-Shahreza, 2018b). Bell and Pomerantz (2016), along the same lines, conceptualize classroom humor as a pedagogical 'safe house' where language learners can creatively construct new personas, pronounce their presence more clearly, and speak truth to power (i.e., show their disagreement and/or resistance to educational authoritarian norms) in a contextually appropriate manner (see also Heidari-Shahreza, 2018b, 2023; Lewis, 2010; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). Humor as such novel and contextually appropriate expression, in essence, points to the criticality of creativity (Beghetto, 2019; Ollerhead & Burns, 2016; Proyer et al., 2019). Classroom humor with its *creative, critical and corrective potential* can singularly be helpful in humanizing language pedagogy and unleashing TESOL from educational constraints (see also McLaren, 2020). As Qin and Beauchemin (2022, pp.314-315) contend "pedagogical humor disrupts a narrow notion of the student–teacher relationship as hierarchical and humanizes the learning experience".

In a *'humor-literate'* class, learners and teachers can address and possibly redress their concerns more effectively beyond the 'power-relations' barriers (Giroux, 2021; Waring, 2013). L2 humor also connects playful creativity to 'positive politeness' and 'strategic competence' which, in turn, can be vital within the expanding realm of English as an international language (EIL) or lingua franca (ELF) (see also Barabadi et al., 2022; Cook, 2000; Oshima, 2018). Waring (2013, p. 199) reaches the same conclusion, observing playful class interaction in an L2 context. She points out:

> It is precisely under such masks of play that the learners were able to engage in the somewhat 'untoward 'acts such as highlighting the teacher's lack of knowledge, chastising the teacher's insufficient assessment, or 'crossing the picket line 'to side with the teacher when a fellow student is being "disciplined."

Construing humor as a manifestation of criticality of creativity, bestows new meanings and functions to playful creativity. It associates humor with 'liberation pedagogy' within critical schools of pedagogy (see also McLaren, 2020). Interestingly, Paulo Freire, in his educational philosophy and theory, depicts the 'pedagogy of the oppressed' as 'pedagogy *of laughter '* (see Lewis, 2010). Investment in pedagogical humor not only provides L2 learners and teachers with a valuable toolkit to achieve their educational objectives, but also equips them with face-saving, anti-oppressive strategies to evaluate and regulate education in their own terms and to their own benefit (Banas et al., 2011; Chen et al., 2019; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2023). In short, humor can be a means for liberating TESOL from educational orthodoxies by putting learners and teachers as creative persons at the center of language education. It can also offer *safe and smart ways of being, saying and doing* (see also Anderson et al., 2022; Cook, 2000; Erdoğdu & Çakıroğlu, 2021; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). It should also be highlighted that the creativeness inherent to humor-integrated learning stands in sharp contrast with *prescriptive creativity,* currently observable in some language settings (see Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021; Cremin & Chappell, 2021; Mullet et al., 2016; Ollerhead & Burns, 2016; Tin, 2016 for more information).

Concluding Remarks

It should be underscored that pedagogical humor goes far beyond having a good sense of humor. This field of study aims to develop the 'humor competence 'or 'humor literacy 'of teachers, aiding them in teaching more effectively (Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). It encourages the *systematic* integration of playful creativity into educational paradigms and invites education-minded individuals to invest more in the far-reaching potential of humor (Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2021). From a sociological perspective, human beings are also *humor beings*. Thus, to adopt a more humanistic, learner-centered approach to TESOL, more attention should be paid to the literature-informed application of humor (see also Cremin & Chappell, 2021; Giroux, 2021; Qin & Beauchemin, 2022).

Along the same lines, HILL can be conceptualized within the wide spectrum of 'playful learning' approaches. Playful learning hinges upon the key characteristics of play (e.g., being highly engaging, whole-person, self-rewarding) most of which may feasibly be attained in pedagogical humor, as well. Hence, the beneficial effects of pedagogical humor can also be aimed for within the pedagogy of play (see Whitton, 2018 for more information on playful learning as a pedagogic philosophy and methodology).

Moreover, given the complexities of second language acquisition (SLA), discrepancies among educational contexts, and the multifarious concept of playful creativity, teaching with and about humor cannot be achieved in behaviorist terms and goals; HILL should be viewed as a pedagogical toolkit that may fit in and enrich educational paradigms and systems (see also Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2023; Prichard & Rucynski, 2020). It does not intend to override the whole curriculum. Rather, it should primarily be considered and implemented as a curricular add-on and educational aid.

Furthermore, the affordances made by humor integration should also be considered in technology-enhanced language learning (TELL). The relevant literature (see e.g., Erdoğdu & Çakıroğlu, 2021; Prichard & Rucynski, 2022) suggests that online learning can facilitate the employment of pedagogical humor by offering a less threatening, more attractive milieu of interaction, especially for the L2 learners who might be less motivated in trying out L2 humor. Likewise, pre-service and in-service training courses and 'microteaching' may probably be needed for teachers to hone their sense of pedagogical humor (see also Banas et al., 2011; Heidari-Shahreza, 2020, 2021).

In addition, playful creativity in general and HILL in particular can notably outstand in teaching English (as an L1 or L2) to *preschool children* (Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021; Cekaite & Aronsson, 2005; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). This period of lifespan is saliently characterized by children's social 'pretend play'. During pretend play, children enter a symbolic world by assigning new meanings to (inanimate) objects, taking on diverse roles and transforming their nearby environment to an imaginary wonderland. The relevant literature indicates that humor and language play are among (core) components of children's pretend play. It should be highlighted that such play has a decisive role in their cognitive, social and emotional development (Cekaite & Aronsson, 2005; Chen et al., 2019; Dilekçi & Karatay, 2023). Holmes et al. (2019), for instance, found positive relationships between preschool children's social pretend play, language development and creativity. Hence, (pedagogical) humor as playful creativity can remarkably be beneficial to early childhood education (ECE) programs (see also Alves-Oliveira et al., 2021; Ata-Akturk & Sevimli-Celik, 2023).

In the end, it is hoped that this article could offer valuable insights into innovative practices in TESOL by opening a window on pedagogical humor as playful creativity. It is also envisaged

that humorizing TESOL can, in the long run, lend a hand in humanizing and optimizing language education.

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To Cite this Article

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Appendix A

Sitcom Synopsis

In the video clip, a travel agency is depicted where several employees including Paul, a tour guide, work. The sitcom begins with the café scene where the colleagues are sitting at a table. A young lady approaches Paul, the tour guide, getting help to find the Rose Cinema; a movie theater which is, in fact, just across the café. Paul makes her totally confused by giving her many wrong directions. The video shows the surprised, smiling faces of Paul's colleagues while he is trying, with lots of hesitation, to give the address. A colleague, then, tells Paul that he has mistaken the cinema with another place. Bob, another colleague then, sarcastically asks if Paul is really a tour guide.

See also the sitcom transcript; the video is also available at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FwfjUuezto.

Sitcom Transcript

00:07   Bob (Paul's colleague): but I'm not a French film fan.

00:15   Woman: excuse me! I'm looking for the Rose Cinema.

00:17   Paul (a tour guide): the Rose Cinema? Let's see…oh

00:22   that's on the corner of Market Street and Park Street.

00:25   or is it 3rd and Grand?... no!

00:29   I think it's on market between 1st and 2nd Avenue. okay! so…

00:34   go around the corner! Walk … three blocks...eh

00:38   no! Five blocks to Harper Street.

00:43   turn left! Sorry!

00:45   right for another two blocks. no! Yes!

00:52   two blocks to fourth Avenue

00:56   take a right!... yes!... walk about five blocks

01:01   to Market Street. go right again!

01:06   go straight two more blocks,

01:09   the cinema is on your right

01:10   Oh! no! sorry. your left.

01:14   Marie (Paul's colleague): Paul!

01:16   Paul: what?

01:18   Marie: [whispers something into Paul's ear]

01:25   Paul: you're looking for the Rose Cinema?

01:28   Woman: yes!

01:29   Paul: go across the street!

01:32   Woman: and?

01:34   Paul: it's across the street.

01:37   Woman: thank you!

01:42   Bob: and you're a tour guide!?

Appendix B

Sample Materials

Map of Town

Stick-Figure Storyboard