



Bilingual Humour and Student Engagement in AI-Enhanced English Language Classrooms

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Abstract

This study examines how the use of bilingual humour influences students' learning experience in AI-enhanced English language classrooms. In multilingual contexts similar to India, students often switch between English and their first language in everyday communication. Humorously, this natural language mixing finds its application in jokes, memes or short videos. It helps create a more pleasant learning environment.

The study adopts a quantitative approach and is based on data collected from 109 undergraduate students using a well-structured questionnaire. The findings show that bilingual humour significantly improves student engagement, reduces anxiety about learning English and increases confidence in using the language. Students also expressed a strong preference for AI-supported learning tools, especially when these include interactive and humour-based content.

The findings show that humour is not simply an additional element in teaching, but a valuable pedagogical strategy that supports both emotional comfort and effective learning. When combined with AI-based tools, bilingual humour helps establish a classroom environment that is more inclusive, relatable and engaging for students.

Keywords: Bilingual Humour; AI-enhanced Learning; English Language Teaching; Code-Switching; Learner Engagement; Language Anxiety.

1. Introduction

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has significantly changed how languages are taught and learned. English classrooms today are no longer limited to textbooks and traditional teaching methods. They increasingly use digital tools, interactive platforms and AI-based applications that make learning more flexible and engaging (Zhai, 2024). These developments are especially important in contexts like India, where students often switch between English and their first language.

In such classrooms, switching between languages, known as code-switching, is a common and natural practice. Rather than being seen as a problem, it can help students understand concepts more easily and express themselves more comfortably (Lan, 2026). When this bilingual practice is combined with humour through jokes, memes or short videos, it creates a learning environment that is relaxed, relatable and more interesting. Students are more likely to participate when classroom language reflects their everyday communication.

Humour plays an important role in easing anxiety and encouraging participation. According to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, language learning becomes more effective when students are emotionally secure and free from fear. A classroom that includes humour allows students to engage without worrying about making mistakes, encouraging them to speak, interact and take risks.

At the same time, AI-supported learning environments provide new possibilities for interaction and personalisation. But technology alone cannot fully address the emotional and social aspects of learning. Research suggests that learning becomes more effective when digital tools are combined with elements such as cultural familiarity, emotional involvement and meaningful interaction (Zhai, 2024). Bilingual humour brings these elements together by

connecting students' linguistic backgrounds with classroom practices.

Although AI is increasingly used in education and multilingual practices are widely recognised, there is still limited research on how bilingual humour influences learners' psychology in AI-enhanced English classrooms. This study considers this gap by examining how humour affects student involvement, reduces anxiety and builds confidence. By focusing on students' responses, the study highlights the importance of integrating technology with simple, human-centred teaching practices in contemporary language learning.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Recent changes in how English is taught have brought greater attention to the roles of technology, multilingual learning, and the emotional side of learning. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has made classrooms notably interactive and student-centred, allowing learners to connect with content through digital tools and personalised learning systems (Zhai, 2024). At the same time, many studies suggest that the success of these technologies depends on more than just their technical features. They also need to address students' emotional and social needs.

In classrooms in which more than one language is used, switching between languages is both common and meaningful. Students often switch between English and their first language to better understand ideas and express themselves more easily. Lan (2026) argues that using multiple languages supports understanding, improves communication, and helps develop a more inclusive classroom environment. Smaglii et al. (2025) also note that shifting between languages helps learners understand how language works in different situations. Taken together, these studies suggest that multilingual practices should be seen as a useful resource rather than a problem in learning English.

Another important aspect of language learning is the role of humour. Humour has been shown to reduce stress, increase interest and encourage students to participate more actively during class. A classroom that includes humour tends to feel more relaxed, which allows students to learn without fear of making mistakes. In digital learning environments, humour becomes especially important, as it helps create a sense of bonding and makes online learning appear more natural and engaging.

This study draws on Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which claims that emotional factors, such as anxiety, confidence, and motivation, strongly influence language learning. When students are at ease and confident, they are more open to learning and more willing to participate. Humour helps lower this emotional barrier by creating a more welcoming and comfortable learning environment.

Dörnyei (2005) also stresses the importance of motivation and emotional connection in successful language learning. Students who feel interested and confident are more likely to take part actively and perform better. Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory further suggests that learning develops through interaction and shared understanding. In this context, bilingual humour can help learners connect new ideas with their existing language and cultural knowledge.

Recent research indicates the role of AI in fostering more adaptable and participatory learning environments. Zhou (2026) suggests that AI can support richer language use and deeper learning when learners are given space for interaction and expression. But there is still limited research that brings together AI, bilingual humour and the emotional aspects of learning within a single framework.

This study examines how bilingual humour, supported by AI-based learning environments, influences student engagement,

anxiety, and confidence. It brings together ideas from technology, multilingual learning and emotional aspects of education to better understand students' experiences in modern English classrooms.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Objectives

This study explores how bilingual humour shapes students' learning experience in AI-enhanced English language classrooms. The main objectives are:

1. To examine how bilingual humour influences student engagement in English classrooms.
2. To understand whether humour helps reduce language learning anxiety.
3. To explore the role of bilingual humour in building students' confidence in using English.
4. To look at how students perceive AI-enhanced learning environments, especially when humour and interactive elements are part of the learning process.

3.2 Research Hypotheses

In line with these objectives, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Bilingual humour positively influences student engagement in English language classrooms.

H2: The use of humour reduces language learning anxiety among students.

H3: Bilingual humour contributes to improving students' confidence in using English.

H4: Students tend to have a positive perception of AI-enhanced learning environments, particularly when humour and interactive content are included.

3.3 Research Design

This study follows a quantitative research design to examine how bilingual humour influences students' learning experience in AI-enhanced English language classrooms. A survey method was used to collect data, as it allows for a structured comprehension of students' perceptions of engagement, anxiety, confidence and learning preferences.

3.4 Participants

The study was conducted with 109 undergraduate students from a multilingual background. The participants were from different years of study and had varied exposure to English as well as AI-based learning tools. The sample illustrates a typical classroom setting where students use both English and their native language while learning.

3.5 Data Collection Tool

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed through Google Forms. The questionnaire had two parts:

- Section A: Basic information such as age, gender, year of study, medium of schooling, and exposure to AI-based tools
- Section B: A set of 14 statements based on a 5-point Likert scale, along with one optional open-ended question

The Likert scale included the following options:

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

The statements focused on key areas such as bilingual humour, student engagement, language anxiety, confidence in using English and perception of AI-enhanced learning.

For the purpose of this study, *bilingual humour* refers to the use of humour that involves a mix of English and the students' native language, including jokes, memes and classroom interactions.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was shared with students through online platforms such as class groups. Participation was voluntary and students were informed that their responses would be used only for academic purposes. No personal identification details were collected, which helped maintain anonymity and encouraged honest responses.

A total of 109 valid responses were received and analysed.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data was analysed using descriptive statistical methods. Mean scores were calculated for each statement to identify patterns in student responses. The focus was on understanding the level of agreement across different areas, particularly engagement, anxiety, confidence and perception of AI-based learning.

Since the study is exploratory in nature, the analysis is limited to descriptive statistics. Inferential statistical tests were not applied, as the aim was to identify general patterns in student responses rather than establish causal relationships.

The findings were then presented using a table and a graphical representation for clarity.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Basic ethical guidelines were followed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were not required to share any personal or sensitive information. The data collected was used only for academic purposes.

4. Results

The data collected from 109 respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics. Mean scores were calculated for each statement to understand students' responses to bilingual humour, engagement, anxiety, confidence and AI-enhanced learning.

The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Student Responses (N=109)

Variable	Mean Score	Interpretation
I enjoy when humour is used in English classes	4.41	High Agreement
Mixing English with my native language makes learning easier	4.18	High Agreement
Bilingual jokes are more relatable	4.09	High Agreement
Memes and funny videos help me remember lessons better	4.46	High Agreement
I feel more active in class when humour is used	4.38	High Agreement
Humour makes the class more engaging	4.49	High Agreement
I feel nervous while speaking in English	3.29	Moderate
Humour helps me feel relaxed in class	4.21	High Agreement
I am less afraid of making mistakes when humour is used	3.95	Moderate to High Agreement
I feel more confident speaking English in a relaxed classroom	4.19	High Agreement
Using my native language along with English boosts my confidence	4.16	High Agreement
AI-based learning makes classes more interesting	4.25	High Agreement
I prefer learning through videos, memes, and interactive tools	4.32	High Agreement
AI-based classrooms are more enjoyable than traditional classrooms	3.96	Moderate to High Agreement

The table indicates a generally high level of agreement among students regarding the positive role of bilingual humour and AI-enhanced learning.

The results show generally high levels of agreement across most variables. Students responded positively to the use of humour and bilingual practices in the classroom. Higher mean scores were observed for statements related to engagement, particularly those

indicating that humour makes the class more interactive and enjoyable.

Regarding bilingual humour, students agreed that mixing English with their native language makes learning easier and more relatable. Responses related to the use of memes and videos also suggest that these elements support better understanding and retention of concepts.

With regard to anxiety, the findings indicate a moderate level of nervousness while speaking in English. At the same time, students reported that humour helps them feel more relaxed and less afraid of making mistakes.

Responses regarding confidence indicate that students feel more comfortable using English in a supportive, interactive classroom environment. The use of bilingual expression appears to enhance this confidence.

Students also showed a favourable perception of AI-enhanced learning environments. Most respondents agreed that AI-based tools make learning more interesting and that they prefer interactive content, such as videos and memes, over traditional methods. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of students' responses across the different variables.

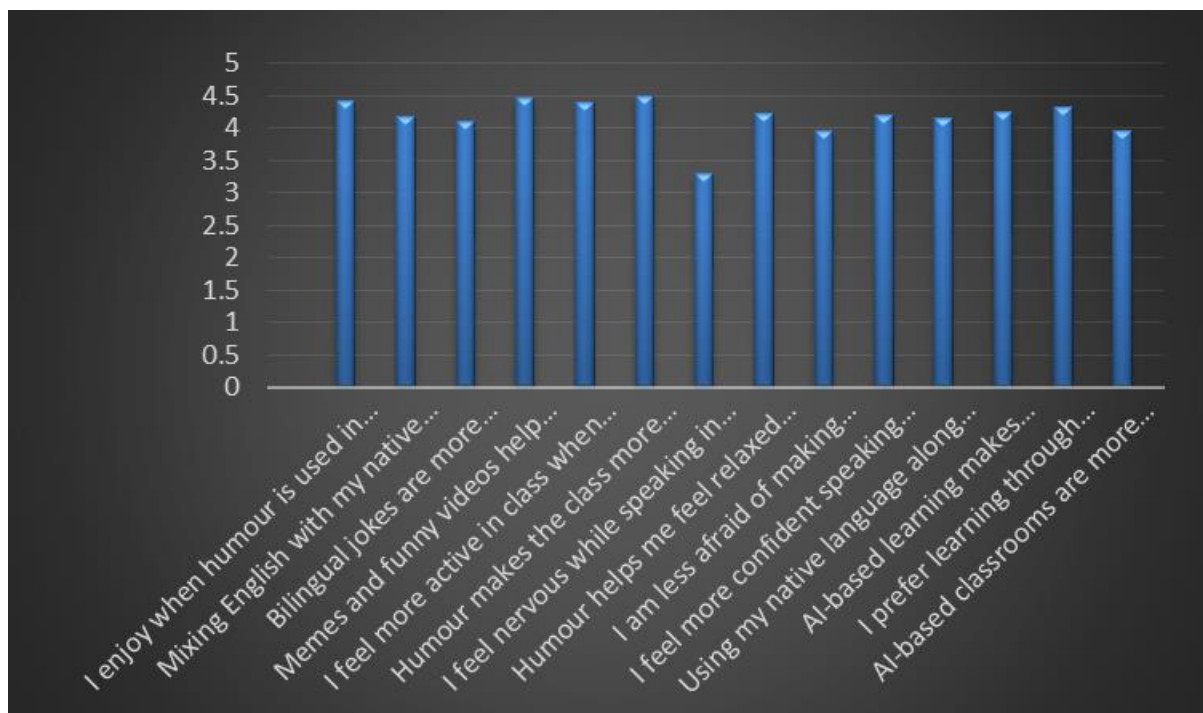


Figure 1: Student Perceptions of Bilingual Humour and AI-Enhanced Learning (N=109)

5. Discussion

The findings of this study show the important role of bilingual humour in shaping students' learning experience in AI-enhanced English language classrooms. Overall, the results point to a clear pattern: Students respond more positively when learning environments are interactive, relatable, and emotionally comfortable. In this context, humour, especially when combined with bilingual expression, plays a key role in creating such conditions.

A major observation is the strong impact of humour on student engagement. The high

mean scores related to classroom interaction suggest that students become more active and involved when humour is part of the learning process. This reinforces the notion that emotional engagement enhances the effectiveness of learning. As noted by Zhai (2024), AI-supported environments are able to enhance learning, while their effectiveness increases when they include elements that stimulate emotional connection. In the present study, humour appears to serve this function by making digital learning spaces livelier and more meaningful.

The role of bilingual humour is also significant. Students indicated that mixing English with their native language makes learning easier and more relatable. This is consistent with Lan (2026), who emphasises that code-switching supports comprehension and adds to a more inclusive classroom environment. Smaglii et al. (2025) similarly note that bilingual language use enhances communication in multilingual settings. Here, bilingual humour not only supports understanding but also helps students relate classroom content to their everyday language use.

Another area that stands out is anxiety. Although students reported some nervousness when speaking English, the findings show that humour helps reduce this tension. Students felt more relaxed and less afraid of making mistakes in a humorous classroom setting. This supports Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which stresses the importance of emotional comfort in language learning. By reducing anxiety, humour creates a stronger, more supportive space for participation.

The findings also indicate an increase in learner confidence. Students reported feeling more comfortable using English in a relaxed and interactive environment. This can be understood in light of Dornyei's (2005) emphasis on motivation and emotional involvement. When students feel supported, they are more willing to communicate and take risks, which contributes to language development.

The findings indicate that students have a favourable view of AI-enhanced learning environments. Many expressed a preference for interactive tools such as videos and memes, suggesting that technology can make learning more engaging. At the same time, the results indicate that technology alone is not enough. As Zhou (2026) points out, digital learning becomes more effective when it allows meaningful interaction and flexible language use. In this

context, bilingual humour appears to act as a link between technology and the human experience, helping maintain both engagement and emotional connection.

The findings suggest that bilingual humour is not merely an additional classroom strategy but an important element of effective language teaching in AI-supported environments. It supports engagement, reduces anxiety, and builds confidence, while also making learning more inclusive and relatable. These results reinforce the idea that successful language learning depends not only on technological tools but also on the emotional and cultural connections students bring into the classroom.

6. Conclusion and Implications

This study set out to examine how bilingual humour influences students' learning experience in AI-enhanced English language classrooms. The findings clearly show that humour, especially when it involves a mix of English and the students' native language, plays a significant role in making learning more engaging, comfortable, and effective.

Students responded positively to humour-based teaching methods, reporting higher levels of engagement and participation. The use of bilingual humour helped them understand concepts more easily and relate classroom learning to their everyday language use. At the same time, humour contributed to reducing anxiety, allowing students to feel more relaxed and less afraid of making mistakes while using English. This, in turn, helped build their confidence and encouraged more active involvement in classroom activities.

The study also highlights the role of AI-enhanced learning environments in supporting interactive and flexible learning. Students showed a clear preference for digital tools such as videos, memes, and other interactive content. However, the findings suggest that technology alone is not enough. It is the combination of

technological tools with human elements such as humour, cultural familiarity, and emotional connection that creates an effective learning environment.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study offer several practical insights for English language teaching:

- Teachers should actively incorporate **humour and bilingual elements** into classroom practices to improve student engagement and reduce anxiety.
- The use of **memes, short videos, and interactive content** can make lessons more relatable and memorable for students.
- AI-based learning tools should be designed to include **emotionally engaging and interactive features**, not just content delivery.
- Code-switching should be recognised as a **useful learning strategy** rather than a limitation, especially in multilingual classrooms.
- Creating a **supportive and relaxed classroom environment** is essential for building students' confidence in using English.

Limitations and Scope for Future Research

This study is based on a sample of 109 undergraduates from a single institution and relies on self-reported data. This may limit the generalisability of the findings, as the results reflect the experiences of a specific group of learners. In addition, self-reported responses may be influenced by students' perceptions and may not fully capture actual classroom behaviour.

Future research can include larger and more diverse samples to improve generalisability. Long-term studies may also be conducted to examine how bilingual humour influences language learning over time.

Further research can explore different types of humour and their specific impact on learning outcomes, as well as how AI tools can be better designed to support emotional and social aspects of language learning.

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Appendix A
Questionnaire

The following questionnaire was used to collect data for the study.

Section A: Basic Information

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Year of Study
4. Medium of Schooling
5. Do you use AI-based tools for learning English? (Yes/No)

Section B: Statements (Likert Scale)

*Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
(Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree)*

1. I enjoy when humour is used in English classes.
2. Mixing English with my native language makes learning easier.
3. Bilingual jokes are more relatable.
4. Memes and funny videos help me remember lessons better.
5. I feel more active in class when humour is used.
6. Humour makes the class more engaging.
7. I feel nervous while speaking in English.
8. Humour helps me feel relaxed in class.
9. I am less afraid of making mistakes when humour is used.
10. I feel more confident speaking English in a relaxed classroom.
11. Using my native language along with English boosts my confidence.
12. AI-based learning makes classes more interesting.
13. I prefer learning through videos, memes and interactive tools.
14. AI-based classrooms are more enjoyable than traditional classrooms.

Optional Question

15. In your opinion, how does humour help in learning English?