



JOKES AND HUMOUR



Notes

Deaf people are very funny too. Jokes and humour are an integral part of deaf culture. Some deaf people are especially good at cracking jokes. Their jokes are a little different than those of hearing people, as they are based on their life experiences as deaf people in a world where the majority of people are hearing. In this lesson, you will learn the sign forms and use of sign space while telling a joke.



OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- relates to the expression of emotions in jokes and humour;
- uses creative sign forms e.g. the body/handshapes/non-manuals in jokes and humour;
- discusses about jokes and humour as part of the cultural expression of the Indian deaf community.

14.1 JOKES AND HUMOUR

This lesson is about jokes and general talks in a funny way. This is very important in ISL. Like other deaf communities, the Indian deaf community also likes to have a good time together and laugh. We will look in some detail at what it means to talk in funny ways or tell jokes in ISL.

**Creative Expressions
in ISL**



Notes

JOKE GOOD is an important compliment. If someone is known to be a JOKE GOOD signer, people like to watch and have a good time. The ISL sign for JOKE is different from what we mean by a joke in English. It does not only mean a fixed funny story but also includes talking in a funny way.

There is often situational comedy (that is, talking about a funny situation that someone has experienced). This may relate to some common specific themes, such as ‘travelling’ or ‘oral education’, or it may just be any situation told in a funny way.



Figure-14.1 : Joke

It is also popular to act like someone else, either hearing or deaf, for a joke. People may act out someone’s signing style, or act as a deaf foreigner using another sign language, or act as a hearing person who is either speaking or trying to sign.



Figure-14.2 : Joke

As you can see,

- ❖ A feature of jokes is exaggerated facial expressions.
- ❖ The signer may act shocked or surprised to create the mood.
- ❖ Expressing emotions is particularly important in jokes.

In jokes, comparison may be important and the signer may use different parts of the space or different character expressions to demonstrate.

Other aspects of storytelling and poetry, overlap, such as the use of role shift (that is, acting out one of the characters in the story).



Figure-14.3



Figure-14.4

Joke

In the joke, the signer acts as different characters, and you can also see exaggerated, slow and large movements which make the signing funnier.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.1

1. True / False
 - a. All deaf people are equally funny.
 - b. It is very difficult to crack jokes in ISL.
 - c. Sometimes deaf people use exaggerated movements and expressions to make their jokes funnier.
 - d. Comparison is important in jokes, and the signer may use different parts of the space or different character expressions to show comparison.
 - e. Jokes and humour are integral parts of deaf culture.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Deaf people also like to have a good time and enjoy talking and laughing together.
- GOOD JOKE is considered an important compliment. It does not mean that a person tells great jokes, like jokes in English, but it means that the person talks in a funny way and people like to watch and enjoy.
- There is a lot of 'situational comedy' in deaf talks, where someone may narrate incidents from travel or the 'Oral education classroom' in a funny way.



Notes

Creative Expressions in ISL



Notes

- Mimicking a hearing person or another deaf person or joking about someone's talking or signing style are also popular themes.
- A person telling a joke or talking funny, uses exaggerated expressions, and to create the mood over expresses emotions like surprise or shock.
- The signer talking funny does a lot of role shifting, means plays different characters in the story and uses signing space and movements accordingly. A signer may fast or slow or pause to create impact.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What does JOKE GOOD mean in ISL?
2. Give an example of a joke in ISL and discuss what makes a joke funny.
3. Give two examples of common themes of jokes in ISL.
4. Compare jokes in hearing culture and deaf culture.
5. Which of these are important in jokes?
 - a. Expressing emotions
 - b. Giving correct facts and information
 - c. Acting as someone else
 - d. Using role shift.
6. Describe your own understanding about the creative use of sign language in Jokes and Humour.



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

14.1

1. a. False b. False c. True d. True e. True