

## AN OPPOSITION-COHERENCE THEORY OF HUMOR

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Previous research in humor has identified three key components affecting the degree of humor: fixity of dominant schema, difficulty in making backward inference, and degree of opposition of two opposing schemata. However, previous research has exclusively examined effects of one of the three components on humorous response, without paying attention to how the three components join to affect humor. Three experiments were conducted to assess contributions of these three components to the degree of humor by using the information integration theory proposed by Anderson (1981;

1982; 1990). Results show that the three components operated in an additive and serial manner, supporting an opposition-coherence theory of joke comprehension. Among the three components, the degree of opposition of two opposing schemata generated by a text seems the most important one in determining the degree of humor. Implications of the present results for humor-creation training are discussed.

**Keywords:** Opposition-coherence theory, Comprehension-elaboration theory, Information integration theory, Cognitive algebra function.