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Type: Practice-oriented Oral Face-to-face presentation

Exploring the role of humor in intercultural communication

Saturday 17 May 2025 13:40 (25 minutes)

TITLE

Exploring the role of humor in intercultural communication

RELEVANT SIG

Intercultural Communication in Language Education

FORMAT

Practice-oriented Oral Face-to-face presentation (25 minutes, including Q&A)

Short English description

KEYWORDS

humor
intercultural communication
verbal irony
social satire

First-time presenter?

ABSTRACT

Humor is a double-edged sword in the context of intercultural communication. While humor has the potential to help interlocutors from various cultural backgrounds bond (Bell & Pomerantz, 2016), failure to comprehend humor can also lead to embarrassment or even conflict (Shively, 2018; Wulf, 2010). Nonetheless, lessons or courses devoted to intercultural communication rarely include an in-depth focus on the role of humor.

To address this need, the presenter designed a university-level course entitled “Humor and Intercultural Communication.” Offered to both degree students and international exchange students, the overall purpose of the course is to raise awareness about how to reap the benefits and avoid the pitfalls of using humor in intercultural environments. Sample units include examining how the form and function of different types of humor

(e.g., social satire, verbal irony) vary in respective cultures. Students also discuss a series of case studies in which cultural differences with regards to humor led to misunderstandings.

The presenter will provide an overview of the course, including main themes, materials, class activities, and assessment. Sample activities from a unit on verbal irony will also be demonstrated. Finally, student reactions to the course (gathered from unit reflections and course surveys) will be shared.

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Session Classification: B8-112 SAT: ICLE & Critical Thinking; SUN: CT, Listening & ER

Track Classification: Intercultural Communication in Language Education