

## **Conversational humour in intercultural interactions: Bridging interactional and cognitive perspectives**

Amir Sheikhan  
The University of Queensland  
([s.a.sheikhan@uq.edu.au](mailto:s.a.sheikhan@uq.edu.au))

Conversational humour, broadly encompassing (sequences of) utterances that are designed to ‘amuse’ participants or are treated as ‘amusing’ by participants across various types of social interaction (Bell, 2015), has been the object of study in pragmatics and other related fields for a number of decades. Research on conversational humour has predominantly taken either discursive or cognitive approaches, with limited cross-fertilisation between the two. However, achieving a comprehensive theory of conversational humour necessitates a synthesis of these two approaches (Attardo, 2020). This study examines conversational humour in intercultural initial interactions, approaching the phenomenon from an integrated perspective that incorporates both discourse-pragmatic and cognitive-pragmatic approaches. The data in this study draws from the Corpus of Video-Mediated English as a Lingua Franca Conversations (ViMEF) and a further collection of video-recordings of intercultural initial interaction in English (IIIE). Using the framework of interactional pragmatics, an approach to the analysis of pragmatic phenomena informed by research and methods in ethno-methodological conversation analysis (Arundale, 2010; Haugh, 2015), the analysis focuses on the design of humour episodes and the sequential environment in which conversational humour accomplishes. This study proposes a model for studying responses to conversational humour and highlights the role of epistemics and co-membership in the interactional accomplishment of humour and thus in theorising conversational humour.

### **References:**

- Arundale, R. B. (2010). Constituting face in conversation: Face, facework, and interactional achievement. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(8), 2078-2105.
- Attardo, S. (2020). *The Linguistics of Humor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bell, N. (2015). *We are not amused: Failed humor in interaction*. Walter de Gruyter.
- Haugh, M. (2015). Impoliteness and taking offence in initial interactions. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 86, 36-42.

### **Biodata:**

Amir Sheikhan has recently completed his PhD in Linguistics at The University of Queensland. His research lies in pragmatics, with a particular focus on conversational humour, (im)politeness, and intercultural communication. His papers have been published in a number of journals and edited volumes, including the *Journal of Pragmatics* and *Pragmatics and Society*.