Emotion and Joking Events in a Preschool EFL Story-Telling Task

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This research investigates the use of emotion in the interactive talk of preschool students at an international preschool in Tokyo, Japan. The focus is on the ways students use humor through a storytelling task.

Students were recorded daily over one school year. These recordings were then transcribed using Computer Language Analysis software (CLAN). The transcriptions were analyzed using joking events (Čekaitė & Aronnsson, 2004) as a signifier of the underlying emotional intent in speech.

The analysis gives support for the improvement of language pedagogy in regards to feedback, joking, and behavior management. Subsequent turns indicate the alignment of emotion between teacher and student. This appears to result in the awareness of correction indicated by uptake. Next, the data shows ways in which students develop in group joking contrasting the notion of humor universals. Finally, it is difficult for a teacher to understand what language constitutes pro-social or anti-social teasing. Conversation analysis may be a useful diagnostic tool for skillfully addressing this difficult matter. The findings all serve as potential directions for further research.


Keywords: Conversation Analysis, Language Development, Language Socialization.