**Self-deprecation in initial interactions between Australians and Americans**

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Self-deprecation involves directing negative assessments at self, or alternatively, playfully understating one’s achievements or abilities in the course of self-disclosure sequences. In this paper we focus on analysing jocular and non-jocular forms of self-deprecation, and how it is managed by participants in initial interactions between American and Australian speakers of English. Drawing from approaches in interactional pragmatics and cultural discourse analysis, we analyse instances of self-deprecation identified from a corpus of more than 50 video recorded interactions involving Australians and Americans getting acquainted in both same and different nationality pairings. Our analysis reveals that despite claims in both popular and academic discourse that Australians favour modest forms of self-presentation, while Americans favour positive forms of self-presentation, the relative frequency of self-deprecation is largely consistent across the Australian and American participants. Differences emerged, however, with respect to the ways in which Australian and American participants *responded* to instances of self-deprecation on the part of another participant. While American participants frequently reciprocated prior self-deprecation on the part of another participant with further self-deprecation on their part, Australian participants tended to reciprocate with self-deprecation less frequently. We suggest that this tendency reflects the way in which self-deprecation is open to serious or non-serious interpretation by those participants. It is suggested that amongst American participants self-deprecation is more likely to be treated as potentially threatening to their ongoing attempts at positive self-presentation in initial interactions, and so the tendency to reciprocate with further self-deprecation constitutes a way of “neutralising” this potential threat, while amongst Australian participants self-deprecation is not evaluated as threatening to the same extent, and so a range of other responses to self-deprecation tend to arise. We conclude that while self-deprecatory practices are an important means of inviting relational intimacy in the course of getting acquainted, they are also a locus of potential misunderstanding or misconstrual in initial interactions amongst American and Australian speakers of English.

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