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Humorous Judgments of Incongruity in Short Internet Videos

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Abstract

With an increased reliance on technology to exchange social communication, social media platforms have become vehicles for humorous content – often taking the form of short internet videos (Vine or TikTok). Dynel (2016) hypothesizes that short internet videos may be effective because they capitalize on contrast to promote humor – i.e., consistent with incongruity theory (see Morreal, 2012). Specifically, incongruity theory assumes that humor arises from a contrast between an expectation and a perceived deviation from that expectation. To test the effects of incongruity in short internet videos, we manipulated linguistic and paralinguistic content in common short internet videos from the defunct social media platform - Vine. Results indicated that incongruence is extremely important for humor perception of short internet videos, as more linguistic and paralinguistic incongruity promoted higher social judgments of humor. Findings support that incongruity is an extremely effective tool for short internet videos to communicate humor.