

## ABSTRACT

A humorous text that is context-free and within itself contains all the information needed for it to be understood is referred as de-contextualized humor (e.g. joke). Previous studies focused on jokes but paid little attention to humorous riddles in which the audience engages in a guessing process. A sample of 162 Cantonese-speaking university students participated in Study 1. Results verified that riddles rather than jokes are preferred in Hong Kong whereas women showed a stronger preference for riddles than men. Experimental interaction sessions revealed that humor after guessing was perceived as more difficult to understand and less funny. Study 2 further confirmed that the guessing process per se enhances the perception of funniness because of a deeper cognitive elaboration.