

D32 Lonell / USA / German Studies

Interaction partner(s): German students
Moment of enquiry: SS 08
Experience of difference: Conversational styles and conducting conversations

Lonell, an American student, has been studying at a German university for a year now. She speaks German well and quickly becomes integrated. After a short time, she has made many friends and receives many invitations. At a get-together with friends and beers, there are a few students whom Lonell doesn't know yet. A history student is thrilled when he finds out that Lonell is American and immediately involves her in a lively conversation about American foreign policy. He wants to hear from the mouth of an American about the mood in the country and the public opinion. Lonell initially tries to explain American points of view, but after a short time she feels backed into a corner by the open and vivid discussion where everyone chimes in, and she grows more and more silent. Finally she gets up and explains in an irritated and obviously insulted tone of voice that she is fed up with her country being abused in this way and leaves. The German students are flabbergasted and don't understand why Lonell is leaving the convivial group so suddenly. From their point of view, nobody insulted the United States!

1. How does the American student interpret the German student's way of discussing?
2. Which communication intentions characterise the German students' conversational style?