

Formulaic Language and Perception of Tone in Academic Reading

Effective inter-cultural communication in a global context has now become imperative as the number of students studying in English internationally has become significant. As many academic instructors can attest, the ability to identify tone in textbook reading often goes undetected by many English Second Language students, thereby reducing the students' understanding that not all of their educational experience is dull and dry. This paper presents an overview of a second study done at a Canadian university examining the perceived differences among approximately 400 first year university students from 14 different linguistic groups as related to humorous tone in academic textbooks across a range of subject areas. The study then analyses the results for specific areas of difference while applying theories of formulaic language to account for some of the problematic items. This study provides some empirical evidence that when learners are not yet highly conversant with the usual contextualized phrases of a language, it is difficult to sense when deviant constructions for the purpose of humour have occurred. This research is in further development to a paper published in *Language and Humour in the Media*, Cambridge Scholars, 2012, which applied sociolinguistic schema theory to a previous study.

Melody Geddert

English Language Studies Faculty

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

melody.geddert@kpu.ca

Previous presentations on above research:

European Society for the Study of English Conference 2010 (Turin, Italy)

English as a Lingua Franca Conference 2011 (Hong Kong)

Global Visions and Perspectives Conference 2011 (Nanjing, China)

Center for Intercultural Language Studies Symposium 2012 (University of British Columbia)