**Intercultural and Native Speakers’ Casual Conversations:
A Comparative Study of Involvement and Humour**

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Research on spoken language has mainly focused on spoken discourses in settings such as classroom and workplace. Another important use of speech, casual conversation, has received much less attention. Casual conversation is a functional and semantic activity. It is a site for the establishment and development of social identity and interpersonal relationships; a way of conveying who we are and of interacting with others in different contexts. This paper reports a comparative study on two casual conversations, which naturally occurred in two different settings; between international students from different language backgrounds and between native speakers of English. The texts were constructed in everyday social settings and reflect the role of language in the construction of social identities and interpersonal relations. The two settings display different uses of language to construct solidarity, intimacy and affiliation. The study uses Eggins and Slade’s (1997) functional and semiotic theoretical framework for analysing casual conversation, in order to describe and explain two aspects of casual talk; namely **involvement** and **humour**. Using a bottom-up approach, the conversations are analysed to look at the use of naming, technicality, swearing and slang for the purpose of involvement. Humour in each conversation is analysed through language devices that trigger laughter from participants. Situational and cultural influences on meaning-making are explored and compared in the analysis of involvement and humour in the two different settings. This paper has implications for applied linguists, social semioticians and teachers of English as a second or foreign language.

**Keywords**: casual conversation, humour, involvement.

**Reference**

S. Eggins & D. Slade. 1997. *Analysing Casual Conversation*. London: Cassell.