Abstract

Nyroos, Lina, lina.nyroos@nordiska.uu.se, Ph.D Student, Dept. of Scandinavian Languages, Uppsala University, Sweden: “Could you rephrase that?” Participants’ display of different perspectives in an educational setting. Språk och stil 20, 2010, pp. 165–188.

This paper examines how participants interactionally display and construct their different orientations towards an ongoing activity. On an overarching level, they participate in the same activity, but on a local level it can be demonstrated that they exercise activities with different goals. I refer to their diverse orientations as different perspectives on the ongoing activity. The analytic emphasis is placed on how participants’ perspectives are interactionally accomplished.

The two sequences analyzed in this paper are extracted from video recordings of Swedish university tutorials. Through close analysis of the interaction, it is demonstrated that the request for scientific terms is used as a resource for the teacher to direct the scope of the interaction. Moreover, this action demonstrates how the teacher’s perspective expresses a preferred focus on an abstract ‘scientific’ level. The teacher’s perspective diverges from several students’ perspectives, which in turn demonstrates different orientations towards the ongoing activity.

From an educational point of view the study provides us with a deeper understanding of how students and teachers may perceive and treat the same activity in the classroom in diverging ways. In a wider context, the study also gives us insights into how different individuals interactionally construct their different understandings of the same context.

Keywords: Conversation Analysis (CA), academic discourse, university tutorial, perspective, participation, Swedish.