

A situated approach to interaction in English as a lingua franca

With the increase in international English-medium study programmes, universities have become linguistic and cultural contact zones, where English is used as the (main) lingua franca, or a contact language used by people who do not share a native language. Research on English as a lingua franca (ELF) so far suggests that interaction in ELF differs from interaction among native speakers of English, but it does not cause much communicative turbulence (e.g. Björkman 2008; Ranta 2006; Jenkins 2000). To understand how English is used in academia today, we thus need to explore the language as it is used in these settings as a lingua franca (Mauranen 2006).

While the phenomenon of ELF is global, ELF speakers need to learn to use ELF in particular settings, just as any language user needs to adapt to new environments. I have therefore adopted a situated approach to the use of ELF in international study programmes, which also complements corpus approaches to ELF use (e.g. research based on ELFA and VOICE corpora; see <http://www.eng.helsinki.fi/elfa> and <http://www.univie.ac.at/voice>).

The situated approach includes that I concentrate on one English-medium university course to explore how the participants in interaction manage and monitor each other's language use. The course participants represent various first languages ranging from Arabic to Finnish, and the course interactions are examined in conjunction with observations, written course material and participant interviews to ground them to the situational contexts.

By taking a situated approach, I can thus focus on how the interactional situation affects the participants as well as how the co-participants affect each other in interaction. Rather than assuming possible communicative problems to be caused by an inability of the speaker, I seek to explore how the participants work together to achieve mutual understanding, and how they capacitate or incapacitate each other in interaction.

My focus is on other-initiated repairs, to use conversation analytic terminology (see e.g. Levinson 1983). These repairs are initiated by a co-participant, and they are interactionally interesting, since they reveal what the co-participants consider unclear or problematic enough to be repaired.

In this university course, it quickly becomes clear that the teachers take on the role of language authority, and most other-initiated repairs are done by them. In my presentation, I take a closer look at these repairs and consider how they relate to a phenomenon called mediation, that is, how a speaker starts rephrasing another speaker's turn that was addressed to someone else. I further explore how this phenomenon relates to conversation analytic repair organisation, and discuss the use of the term *repair*.

The study forms part of the project *Studying in English as a lingua franca* at the university of Helsinki (see <http://www.eng.helsinki.fi/elfa/self>).

References

- Björkman, Beyza 2008. English as the lingua franca of engineering: the morphosyntax of academic speech events. *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 7(3), 103-122.
- Jenkins, Jennifer 2000. *The Phonology of English as an International Language: New Models, New Norms, New Goals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Levinson, Stephen C. 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mauranen, Anna 2006. A rich domain of ELF – the ELFA corpus of academic discourse. *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 5(2), 145-160.
- Ranta, Elina 2006. The 'attractive progressive' – why use the -ing form in English as a lingua franca? *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 5(2), 95-116.