

The use of situated objects in pre-second insert expansions in L2 service encounters

This multimodal conversation analytical paper (Mondada 2019) examines how situated objects are used to achieve intersubjectivity in service encounters where the clients are L2 users of the language of interaction. In service encounters in marketplaces, items such as coffee, fruits, and vegetables are generally not only visible, but also available to be experienced through other senses. The analysis focuses on the use of objects in pre-second insert expansions and scrutinizes how the participants manage to facilitate understanding by pointing to, touching, or maneuvering situated objects that can be seen, touched, smelled, and even tasted in interactions (see Nevile et al., 2014).

The data for the paper come from service encounters video-recorded as part of pedagogical interventions conducted in adult L2 literacy training for newcomers in Finland. The pedagogical interventions aimed at bridging the language-use contexts in the classroom and in-the-wild (see Eilola & Lilja, 2021). The dataset includes 26 interactions from a marketplace, restaurant, café, and pharmacy. In the data, base sequences—such as requests and their responses—are often expanded by pre-second insert expansions, in which salespersons seek further information before producing the pending second pair part (Schegloff, 2007, p. 100). Insert expansions thus intervene between the first and second pair parts, temporarily suspending the progression of the base sequence (an adjacency pair) (Schegloff, 2007, p. 97).

A representative case illustrates how a customer initiates an order sequence by saying *minä haluaa, (.) jäätelö, (.) suklaati ja vanilla* ('I want (.) an ice cream (.) chocolate and vanilla'). To produce the second pair part of the base sequence, the clerk needs to know whether the customer wants the ice cream in a cone or a tub. She inquires about this by launching a pre-second insert expansion in the form of verbal alternative question, accompanied by a waving of a cone in the air. The customer responds by producing a second pair part of the pre-second: he points toward the cone and says *ee::: kuppi* 'ehm a tub'. Despite the apparent multimodal disalignment, the interaction proceeds smoothly, as the clerk treats the response as sufficient and closes the base sequence by handing over an ice cream in a cone.

The analysis sheds new light on the creative methods that the participants utilize in L2 interactions to achieve intersubjectivity and highlights the crucial role of material resources in facilitating the progressivity of L2 interaction in a way that potentially supports L2 learning.

References

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