

'I Mean' in Teacher Questioning Sequences in Post-Task Discussions: A Conversation Analytic Study

Authors : Derya Duran, Christine Jacknick

Abstract : Despite a growing body of research on classroom, especially language classroom interactions, much more is yet to be discovered on how interaction is organized in higher education settings. This study investigates how the discourse marker 'I mean' in teacher questioning turns functions as a resource to promote student participation as well as to enhance collective understanding in whole-class discussions. This paper takes a conversation analytic perspective, drawing on 30-hour video recordings of classroom interaction in an English as a medium of instruction university in Turkey. Two content classrooms (i.e., Guidance) were observed during an academic term. The course was offered to 4th year students (n=78) in the Faculty of Education; students were majoring in different subjects (i.e., Early Childhood Education, Foreign Language Education, Mathematics Education). Results of the study demonstrate the multi-functionality of discourse marker 'I mean' in teacher questioning turns. In the context of English as a medium of instruction classrooms where possible sources of confusion may occur, we found that 'I mean' is primarily used to indicate upcoming adjustments. More specifically, it is employed for a variety of interactional purposes such as elaboration, clarification, specification, reformulation, and reference to the instructional activity. The study sheds light on the multiplicity of functions of the discourse marker in academic interactions and it uncovers how certain linguistic resources serve functions to the organization of repair such as the maintenance of understanding in classroom interaction. In doing so, it also shows the ways in which participation is routinely enacted in shared interactional events through linguistic resources.

Keywords : conversation analysis, discourse marker, English as a medium of instruction, repair

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