

Abstract

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The aim of this thesis is to study argumentation in interaction. The data is drawn from a corpus which consists of 27 recorded group interviews with senior high school students discussing music (approx. 20 hours or 205,000 words).

The theories and methods applied in the study are conversational analysis, interactional sociolinguistics and to some extent argumentation theory. The dynamic interactional view is predominant.

Argumentation is defined as interaction where different opinions give rise to spontaneous, dialogical and elaborated disagreement which is expressed in an adjacent relation. As much as almost one third of the words in the data are used during the argumentations. There are as many argumentations as 454 altogether or 17 argumentations per conversation on average.

The complexity and length of the argumentations vary to a great extent. The variation is explained by the uses of different argumentative techniques, different argumentative styles, the relationships between interlocutors, and the two social variables study programme and gender.

In general the students are very skilled at arguing and they utilise a variety of argumentative tools (argumentative techniques). Consequently, the results show that argumentation is a well-known everyday form of communication.

Key words: argumentation; argument; interaction; conversation; interactional style; youth; conversation analysis; interactional sociolinguistics; socio-economic position; gender.

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