

TITLE: Positioning phrases in interaction. Syntax, prosody and function
SWEDISH TITLE: Positioneringsfraser i interaktion. Syntax, prosodi och funktion.
LANGUAGE: Swedish (English summary)
AUTHOR: Susanna Karlsson

Abstract

This thesis is an empirical study of how *positioning* is achieved in interactional Swedish. Positioning has previously been described in terms of *epistemic modality*, *interpersonal positioning*, *stance* and *speech act adverbials*. The aims of the study are, firstly, to identify what linguistic resources are used to achieve positioning in interaction. A second aim is to describe where in the turn-constructional unit, TCU, positioning is achieved, and how location within the TCU is related to syntax, prosody and function. And thirdly, the aim is to describe some of the interactional sequences in which positioning takes place.

The empirical data for this study is a collection of natural conversations from a wide range of interactional contexts. The collection comprises 6 hours and 30 minutes of conversation, approximately 70.000 words.

The theoretical and methodological framework for this thesis is *Interactional Linguistics*, where traditional grammar and *Conversation Analysis* are combined.

This thesis focuses on how speakers use certain verbs and verb phrases to position themselves with respect both to the content of the utterance and to the other participants.

In order to analyse the distribution of the verb phrases in the TCU, a so-called *phase schema* is used. This reflects the production of the real time TCU with regards to how syntax, prosody and pragmatics are employed. This part of the study focuses on the distribution of the five most frequent verbs within the turn and the TCU. Factors that influence the function, meaning and form of the verbs are syntax, prosody and pragmatics.

The interactional functions of positioning verb phrases are of a turn orchestrating, a relational as well as a semantic nature. These functions are influenced by position, interactional context, and semantic context. The verbs often appear in narratives, in evaluations, in guessing sequences, in explanations and in environments where there are interactional problems. In other words, the positioning verb phrases display social actions, and function as grease in the interactional machinery.

KEY WORDS: Positioning, epistemic modality, stance, verb phrases, Interactional Linguistics, Conversation Analysis, turn, TCU, prosody, sequence analysis, Swedish.

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