

Vägar till förståelse

Andraspråkstalare i samtal med en
studie- och yrkesvägledare

(English Summary)

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Akademisk avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i nordiska språk,
som enligt beslut av humanistiska fakultetsnämnden vid
Göteborgs universitet kommer att försvaras offentligt
onsdagen den 19 juni 2013 kl. 10.15 i Lilla Hörsalen, Humanisten
Renströmsgatan 6, Göteborg



TITLE: Ways of understanding. Career counselling with second language speakers.
SWEDISH TITLE: Vägar till förståelse. Andraspråkstalare i samtal med en studie- och yrkesvägledare.
LANGUAGE: Swedish (English summary)
AUTHOR: Karin Sheikhi

Abstract

The aim of this work is to explore how shared understanding is achieved in career counselling with second language clients. Video-recorded counselling sessions are analysed along with participant interviews and other secondary data. The methods are mainly interpretative, but some quantification of data has been made. The thesis has an emergent research design and comprises three sub-studies. These make use of various theoretical frameworks and concepts, such as interactional sociolinguistics, modified interaction and CA.

The results show that the second language speakers' knowledge of Swedish, as it is normally tested, is not crucial for the degree of success in achieving shared understanding. Instead, other aspects of conversational ability, such as explicitness, persistence and social skills, in combination with the ability to utilise the first language speaker as an interactional resource, are more significant.

It is also clear that the first language speaker, being at the same time the institutional representative, has far-reaching responsibilities in the conversation in order for the interactants to reach shared understanding. The analyses show that "understanding" in counselling often implies a kind of learning for the clients. Only after a certain degree of learning are the clients able to express their ideas or make a decision and, subsequently, negotiate shared understanding of their intentions.

All three sub-studies show that the negotiation of understanding is successful at a local level in most cases. Global understanding, however, is a challenging task. The cause of these difficulties is more often the asymmetrical relationship regarding knowledge of education and the labour market than linguistic shortcomings in the clients. To achieve shared global understanding requires a degree of awareness and activity from both interactants and a substantial amount of negotiation.

KEYWORDS: career counselling, communicative projects, institutional talk, modified interaction, reformulations, second language conversation, Swedish as a second language, understanding

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DISTRIBUTION: Institutionen för svenska språket
Box 200
405 30 Göteborg

OMSLAGSBILD: Kullez/flickr.com

ISSN: 1652-3105

ISBN: 978-91-87850-51-6

LÄNK TILL E-PUBLICERING: <http://hdl.handle.net/2077/32652>

SÄTTNING: Thomas Ekholm

TRYCKNING: Ineko, Göteborg 2013