

## Högre seminariet i Nordiska språk

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*The development of interactional competence in a second language:  
A longitudinal study of negative assessments in French*

Interactional competence may be described as speakers' routinized yet context-sensitive interactional procedures for accomplishing social actions and managing the organizational infrastructure of interaction (Pekarek Doehler & [Pochon-] Berger, 2015; 2018). Research on the development of interactional competence in a second language (L2) has focused on speakers' growing ability to manage for example turn-taking, disagreements, and storytellings (see Skogmyr Marian & Balaman, 2018, for an overview). In this talk, I present the results of a longitudinal study of L2 French speakers' interactional use of negative assessments in complaints about non-present third parties or state of affairs. Complaining is a ubiquitous social activity, which typically serves social-relational purposes in interaction (cf. Hanna, 1981). Considering the important role of assessments in complaints, and for participation in social interaction in general (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; 1992), it may be important for L2 speakers to develop practices for offering appropriate and timely negative assessments in the L2.

The study draws on video-recorded interactions among university students in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Using multimodal conversation analysis, I analyze the use of negative assessments among five L2 speakers at elementary (A1-A2) and upper-intermediate/advanced (B2-C1) level of French. Results show differences over time and across proficiency levels primarily in the linguistic formatting of negative assessments and in the use of bodily-visual conduct for expressing negative stance. Elementary speakers deploy a limited repertoire of linguistic formats for accomplishing high-grade first assessments and for upgrading first assessments, and they rely heavily on non-linguistic resources for displaying negative stance. Upper-intermediate/advanced speakers deploy a wider range of linguistic resources for assessing than elementary speakers, which is observable in more diverse lexical and syntactical formats of high-grade first assessments and upgraded second assessments. This change over time has interactional consequences for speakers' participation in complaint sequences, particularly in the context of joint complaining I discuss the implications of the findings for our understanding of the development of L2 interactional competence and for L2 teaching practices.