

# SPREMI

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### **The (non-)uptake of student initiated stories in study circles: Opening or shutting down potential learning space**

The paper deals with stories told by students of practical nursing. The data are gathered in optional study circles organised by the nursing school during a three years period. The students gather once a week in a small group together with at least one adviser. The data include 54 sessions that last from one and a half up to three hours. 12 sessions were picked out for detailed analysis because of the high frequency of student-initiated stories. Among the students, there are both native and non-native speakers of Finnish. The method applied is ethnomethodological conversation analysis. A story is defined as a sequence in which one speaker launches a multi-unit turn and in which functional story parts (introduction, climax and evaluation) can be located (Mandelbaum2013). The study deals with the hypothesis that the evaluation sequence may function as a possible learning space. Learning space is defined as situations in which the learner has the occasion to practice skills and to participate to an activity (Hanks1991). In this study learning is defined as an activity where participants together validate and assess things at issue. The creation of a learning space then presupposes recipients' up-take of the story and its integration to the mainline of talk.

The study's focus lies on the story's evaluation sequence. On the one hand, the analysis presents teller's technique making recipient reaction and affiliation relevant. On the other, the analysis deals with recipient affiliative activities and recipients' devices for story up-take (Jefferson 1978; Stivers 2008). In my analysis, I consider teller's devices to introduce the story. Teller may introduce a story by indicating the kind of story (funny, sad) she will tell. I investigate the correlation of story introductions, recipient evaluative and affiliative behaviour and the (non-) uptake of a story while shifting back to the mainline of talk. The study suggests that recipients' affiliative behaviour influences the emergence of a shared learning experiences. On the contrary, recipients' lack of affiliative and evaluative behaviour may delete the story's potential to serve as a possible learning space.

Keywords: Storytelling, affiliation, evaluation, learning space, Finnish as L2

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**Saija Merke** has written her PhD on the functions of student question sequences in lessons of Finnish-as-a-foreign-language. She has published on moral implications of questioning and explanation activities in classroom contexts. Her research interest lies on issues of learning and especially language learning from a conversation analytic perspective. She has worked at the universities of Caen (Normandy, France), Helsinki and Tampere. She holds the position of a university teacher of Finnish language at the Åbo Akademi University.