

‘Eow’, ‘lak’, ‘yani’ and ‘dig’: Four new epistemic interjections

DITTE ZACHARIASSEN AND TINE LYKKEGAARD NIELSEN

ABSTRACT

This article describes four interjections, *eow*, *lak*, *yani* and *dig*, drawn from on a corpus of recordings from linguistically very diverse urban areas in Aarhus. The analysis is based on interactional linguistics, which combines conversational analysis and traditional grammar in order to account for the interactional functions of these words. *Eow* can be used when pointing out possible solutions to problems, *lak* when blaming others for their lack of knowledge, *yani* when sharing knowledge, and *dig* when rejecting another speaker’s right to contribute to the interaction. Each word signals aspects of the speaker’s attitude to knowledge, and the analysis includes Heritage’s (2012) concept of epistemics. Previous descriptions indicate that the words can “attract attention” and that they can be used in contrast to “speaking nicely”. The analysis shows how these descriptions might be modified and suggests that the words have individual unique interpretations and serve different interactional functions.

KEYWORDS: interjections; epistemics; multiethnic; urban dialects; interactional linguistics