

DARING TO SPEAK!
BOOSTING CONFIDENCE AND
ENGAGEMENT IN THE
LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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OUTLINE

- Introduction – Mads and Maria
- Background: Quiet learners - foreign language anxiety
High quality teaching and considerations for the
language classroom
- Activities and practical advice
- Questions and discussion

What language or languages do you teach?

As a language teacher, what do you perceive to be the biggest challenges.

Copland et al. (2014):

- Making students speak the target language.
- Motivation.
- Dealing with mixed-ability groups.

SOME BACKGROUND

In grades 2-5 (225 learners in 10 classrooms)...

...as many as 18% of learners reported feeling anxious *often/almost always/always* during English lessons.

Most of them felt that English made them more nervous than other subjects. (Nilsson, 2019)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY

- Feelings of apprehension, stress and anxiety in relation to classroom language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986)
- "The worry and negative emotion aroused when learning and using a second language and is especially relevant in the classroom where self-expression takes place" (Gregersen and MacIntyre, 2014, p.3)
- FLA has negative effects on the learning process, performance, strategies and self-image (MacIntyre, 2017).
- Vicious cycle: both a cause and an effect (Gkonou, 2017; MacIntyre, 2017)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY (FLA)

- Develops early on – long-term effects (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2009)
- Peaks during teen-age years (MacIntyre & Dewaele, 2014)
- Common among high level learners (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002)
- Common in mixed ability-groups (Frantzen & Magnan, 2005)
- And among student teachers (Briesmaster & Briesmaster-Paredes, 2015; Tum, 2015)
- 30-40% of learners share the experience of at least modest levels of FLA (Horwitz, 2016)

THE SCANDINAVIAN CONTEXT

Communicative Language Teaching – interaction in focus, language use

English:

- High proficiency in Scandinavia – “everyone masters English”
- A high-status language
- Native-speaker norm
- Heterogeneous classrooms

Other languages: motivation (European Commission, 2012)

LEARNER PERSPECTIVES

Beliefs about language learning

- TL input is important!
- Mistakes are natural and unavoidable
- Students must engage, dare, try

Experiences

- Some L1 can be helpful
- Crucial to understand instructions!
- But making mistakes is scary!
- But I panic, feel nervous, get brainfreeze, don't dare.

(Nilsson, 2020, 2021)

CONTEXTUAL TRIGGERS OF FLA

- Speaking! Making mistakes, mispronouncing
- Fear of negative reactions from peers
- Not grasping instructions

A classroom phenomenon, where common lesson situations spark anxiety in some learners.

DIMENSIONS OF HIGH QUALITY TEACHING

(HAMRE ET AL., 2013)

What qualitative dimensions of classroom instruction promote both social and academic development in learners?

Classroom interactions! Teachers' ability to

- deliver instructional support
- manage classroom organization
- offer emotional support

Qualitative language teaching hinges not only on the cognitive and linguistic elements, but also the social, emotional and psychological considerations.

DIMENSIONS OF HIGH QUALITY TEACHING

(HAMRE ET AL., 2013)

Instructional

Organizational

Emotional

- Atmosphere - emotions – relationships
- Confidence and motivation
- Feeling heard and seen
- Building a non-threatening and supportive atmosphere.
- Discuss atmosphere, and what it *feels* like to interact in a new language!

DIMENSIONS OF HIGH QUALITY TEACHING

Instructional

Organizational

Emotional

- Classroom management.
- Making sure time is spent on effective learning.
- Clear goals, expectations and instructions
- Input in full class, practice in pairs.
- Plenty of time to practice
- Possible to make heterogeneous groups

Hamre et al. (2013)

DIMENSIONS OF HIGH QUALITY TEACHING

Instructional

- The actual teaching: goals, content, teaching approaches, scaffolding, activities, strategy use, metacognition, assessment
- Rich TL input!
- Judicious use of the L1 to promote learning.
- Repetition, plenty of practice.

Organizational

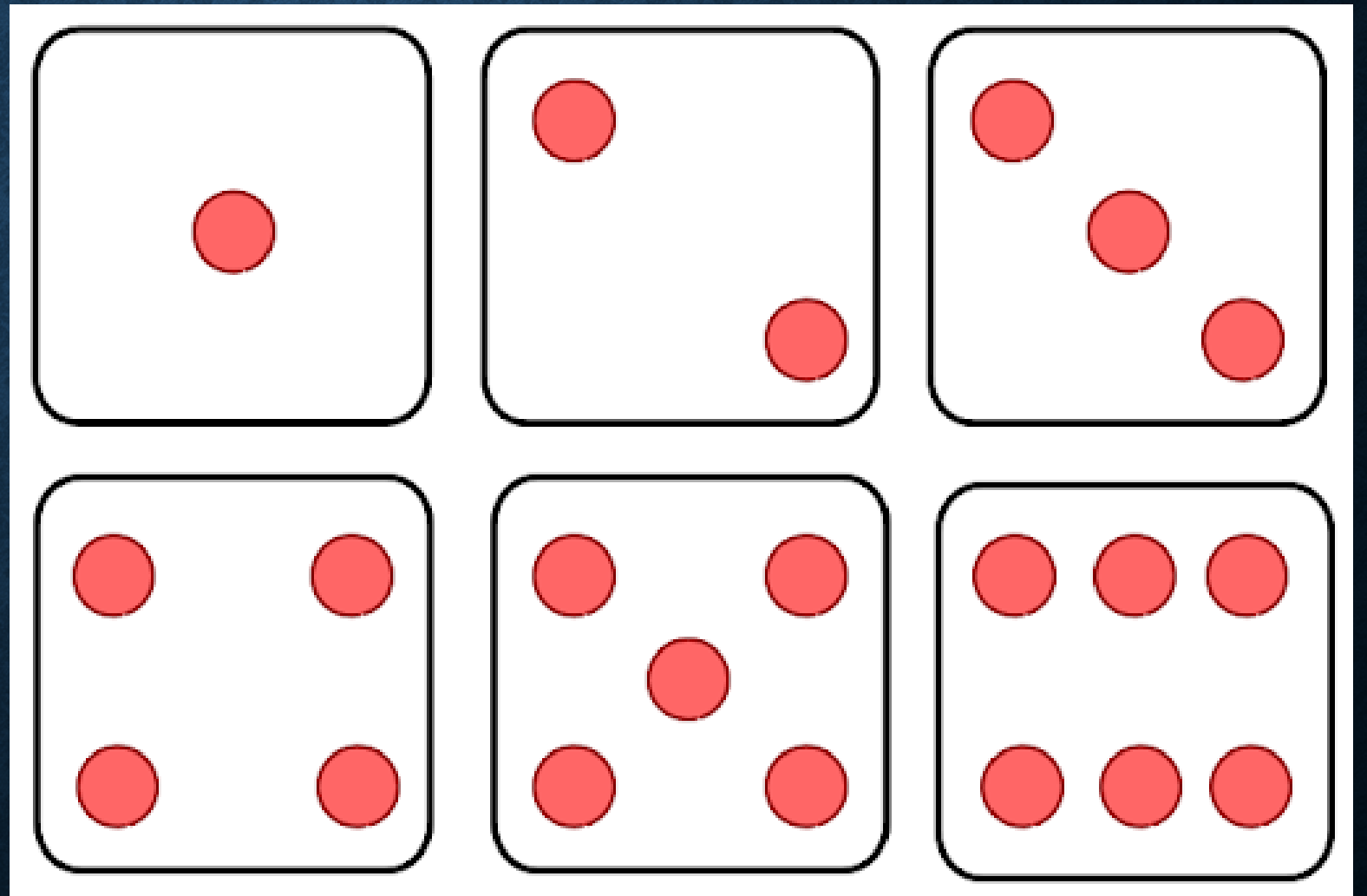
Emotional

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"SIX DOTS"

Cut out small pictures of the sides of a die, and put them up around the classroom. Students are divided in to groups. Each group has a die. After throwing the die, they will move to the same number as the die hit. Questions to answer can either be put below the picture of the die, or be up on the board. More inspiration in the hand-out.



METADICUSSION – GOALS AND APPROACHES

- Think-pair-share: What do you know when you know a language?
- Think-pair-share: What five things do you believe to be most important? Rank them.
- Class vote on the two most important things.

Result: speaking/understanding/interacting!

Learners, teacher and steering documents agree...

- So, how do we achieve these goals?

Discuss atmosphere, what it feels like to make mistakes, ground rules.

”SAY IT!”

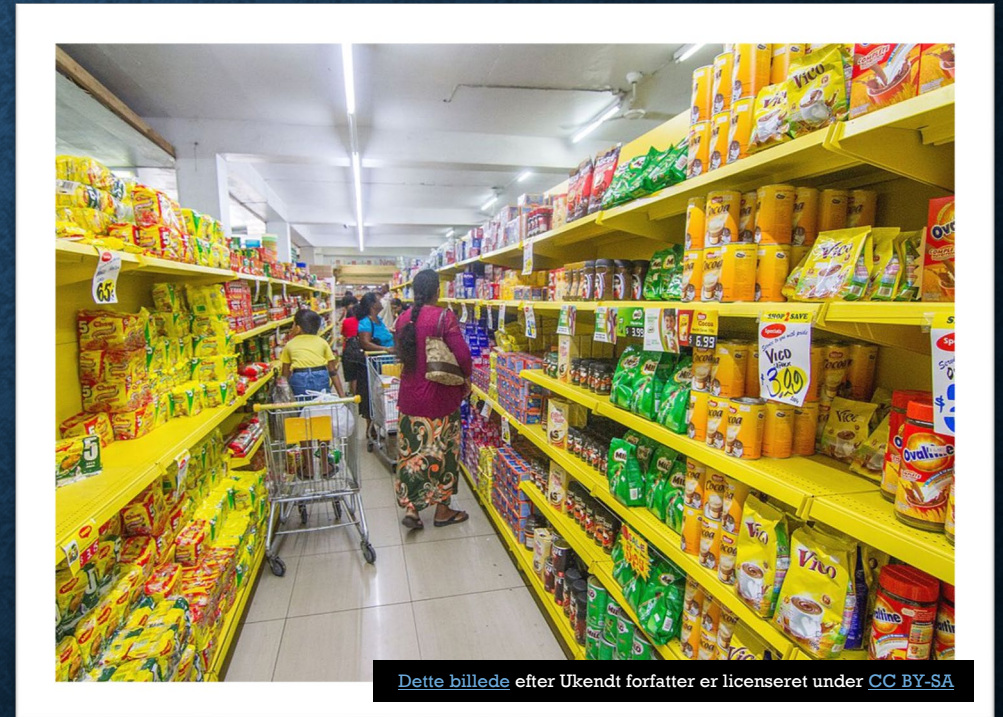
(BASED ON ”RUNDT PÅ GULVET” FROM TV2)

The students will in groups prepare scenarios, roles and words that go along with them, i.e.:

- “At the supermarket”
- Roles: Customer, employee
- Words: Frozen food, soda, toilet paper, pineapple

The words are written into a slideshow, or on a piece of paper.

- In this example, the employee must not see the words, and it’s up to the customer to get the employee to say the word, without actually using the word.



TANGO

Quickest way of creating an information gap!

One student can see the teacher and the board, but their partner cannot.



Show object for L1 to describe and L2 to guess.

Make a big drawing on the whiteboard for L1 to describe and L2 to copy.

Show a video-clip without sound. Then, L1 describes the clip in as much detail as possible. The teacher then asks questions to the L2s.

SPEAKING BINGO / 4-IN-A-ROW

I completely agree	That's a good point	That's just what I was thinking	Absolutely
I agree up to a point but...	I see your point, but...	I'm not so sure about that	Well, you could be right
I totally disagree	I'm afraid I can't agree with you	Yes, but don't you think....	What I object to is...

- A 4-by-4 bingo plate is made by the students.
- In each square a word or a phrase is put in.
- In the example given here, the students would practice useful phrases for conversation.
- The students walk around the classroom and talk to different classmates. Not the same person twice in a row!
- If a person can answer correctly, a mark is put by the square, until someone has 4 in a row.
- More in the hand-out.

THE DINNER PARTY

My name is...

I am...

I have...

I have...

I like...

I don't like...

I dream of...



THE DINNER PARTY

My name is Sara White

I am a librarian

I have two cats

I have a tatoo on my back

I like driving fast

I don't like people who are
rude

I dream of moving to Africa



THE DINNER PARTY

"Welcome to my birthday party. I am happy to have gathered so many of my relatives, friends and colleagues. I am aware that many of you don't know each other from before."



Learners hold their photos in front of them and make small talk to the person in front of them. Move two seats to the left and repeat for the main course and for dessert.

FOUR CORNERS

- Put those 4 emojis up in the classroom, give students a phrase to “react” to, by moving to a corresponding emoji.
- A question could be: “Does pineapple belong on a pizza?”



= Love



= Hate



= Like



= Dislike

THE PHONE CALL

Together on the board, outline a simple phone conversation with some kind of proposal:

Would you like to go to the movies tomorrow?

Would you like to play tennis this weekend?

- Yes, I'd love to/Sorry, I can't...

Learners sit in groups of 5.

One learner calls out a phone number to a friend.


Whoever hears his/her phone number answers.

Improvise a dialogue, hang up. Repeat.

Consider making homogeneous proficiency groups.

Your phone numbers:

45 68 11
86 93 27




Phone number:

35 48 91
72 91 40
12 56 84
83 27 80

Your phone numbers:

35 48 91
18 94 36



Phone numbers to your friends:

50 28 90
13 83 59
14 63 19
86 93 27

USING DIGITAL MEDIA FOR PRESENTATION



- Using digital media to practice presentation
- Some students find it easier to present things in smaller groups, but an issue with doing so is that the teacher seldom gets to listen to every student's presentation and can't give constructive feedback. Using digital media, like audio recordings, screen recordings and video assignments, will let the students hand in presentations that the teacher can give very specific feedback on. Students can also listen to their own presentation again, to understand the feedback better. Also, they can re-do the presentation, if they are not satisfied, letting them monitor themselves better than a presentation in class.
- Many video editing apps also lets students do the talking as a voice over, separate from filming. This lets them focus on one thing at a time, instead of doing everything all at once.

INTERVIEW THE PAINTING

Divide learners into groups. Assign them one character (or animal) in a painting. Together they prepare questions for all the other characters.

Make jig-saw groups: the man, the woman, the dog. Learners interview each other, in character.

Idea from Harmer, 2007: How to teach English.

By Jan van Eyck, National Gallery, London

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11343084>



STRANGE DIALOGUE



- The teacher prepares an envelope filled with premade sentences. The sentences don't have to link to each other in any way (see examples in hand-out).
- In groups, the students will receive a minimum of two sentences. They are now tasked with making a role-play, where they use both sentences, as naturally as possible.