Practicing interactional competence:
It all starts with task design

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Abstract

Det kan vara svårt att få elever att samtala fritt med varandra på målspråket i språk-klassrummet. En anledning är att de undervisningaktiviteter som används för muntlig interaktion inte ger eleverna förutsättningar för deltagande i samkonstruerade och meningsfulla samtal, vilket i sin tur kan relateras till hur muntlig färdighet konceptualiseras i teori och praktik. Syftet med det här kapitlet, som baseras på forskningsprojektet Från monologer till dialoger, är att visa hur problembaserade upp-gifter möjliggör kollaborativa samtal på engelska och moderna språk. I projektet sam-arbetade forskare och lärare i två faser: Fas 1 som fokuserade på uppgiftskonstruktion och Fas 2 som fokuserade på beskrivning av "bra interaktion". I den första fasen konstruerades, testades, analyserades och reviderades uppgifter i flera cykler. Den iterativa processen resulterade i en modell för konstruktion av öppna problembaserade uppgifter som får elever att muntligt interagera med det kommunikativa syftet att lösa problemet. I den andra fasen fördjupades analysen av elevernas muntliga interaktion genom tillämpning av samtalsanalytiska verktyg och det teoretiska konstruktet interaktionell kompetens, som är ett handlingsorienterat perspektiv på muntlig kommunikation. Resultaten visar att uppgifterna ger eleverna förutsättningar att föra dialoger snarare än monologer: I den problembaserade interaktionen använder eleverna sina tillgängliga resurser, både verbala och kroppsliga, för att utföra relevanta handlingar oavsett språklig färdighetsnivå. De samkonstruerade interaktionerna karaktäriseras dessutom av turtagning anpassad till kontexten och till samtalspartnern. Kapitlet lyfter vikten av meningsfulla muntliga uppgifter vars konstruktion möjliggör användning av elevers interaktionella kompetens i språkklassrummet.

Nyckelord: samtalsanalys, interaktionell kompetens, uppgiftsbaserad språkundervisning, uppgiftskonstruktion, främmande språk

Introduction

This chapter reports on a collaborative, practice-based research project called *From monologues to dialogues*, conducted by a research team of researchers and schoolteachers (see also Berggren et al., 2023; Kunitz et al., 2022). The project originated from foreign language (FL) teachers' difficulties with engaging the pupils in collaborative and co-constructed oral interaction. More specifically, the chapter aims to: describe the practice-based problem addressed by the project; present the study design adopted in the project; and illustrate the project's findings which carry important pedagogical implications that are relevant for the language teaching profession. The construct of interactional competence (or IC; see Pekarek Doehler, 2018) will also be discussed as it concerns an important aspect of oral proficiency that was used in the project to describe the interactional skills displayed by the participating pupils with the analytical tools afforded by conversation analysis (CA – Sidnell & Stivers, 2013; see below).

As mentioned above, our starting point was a practice-based problem concerning a challenge that has been described in various studies related to the teaching of both English and Modern Languages (MLs) in Sweden (e.g. Granfeldt et al., 2019; Sandlund & Sundqvist, 2016): the difficulty of "getting pupils to talk". Generally, foreign language (FL) classroom conversations seem to be driven by a focus on language display rather than language use (cf. Ellis, 2003). In MLs, in particular, pupils are reported to lack opportunities to practice free oral interaction (Granfeldt et al., 2019; Skolinspektionen, 2022), possibly because teaching tends to focus on form rather than on communicative function (Skolverket, 2014). This imbalance is also reflected in the ML textbooks where structured form-focused activities are prevalent (Brito Engman & Aronsson, 2022). Even when speaking skills are practiced, speaking activities tend to be mechanical and controlled, with pupils being instructed to use a set of pre-specified words, phrases, and grammar structures; in addition, pupils are typically given planning time to prepare for speaking activities, which results in script-reading rather than spontaneous production (Skolinspektionen, 2022).

In the English classroom, on the other hand, there are occasions for the pupils to speak spontaneously, but the activities for oral production still seem to limit pupils' possibilities to engage in meaningful communication. Studies on pupil interaction in test situations describe how the conversation tends to unfold as a series of parallel monologues (Galaczi, 2008, 2014) or "monological accounts" (Sandlund & Sundqvist, 2016, p. 123), where each pupil produces an extended turn-at-talk and then gives the floor to the coparticipant with formulaic expressions like what about you?, do you agree? and what's your opinion?; once the coparticipant is speaking, no displays of engagement with the coparticipant's talk are produced. Teachers also describe

unauthentic interview situations in which pupils exchange information that is already known (cf. Berggren et al., 2019).

It can be argued that this paucity of opportunities for meaningful and free oral interaction in the FL classroom contradicts the communicative perspective expressed in the syllabi for English and MLs, for example through the statement that FL instruction should aim for the development of an "all-round communicative ability" (Skolverket, 2024, p. 43). In other words, there seems to be a discrepancy between what is done in the classroom and what is predicated in national policy documents.

In our project, it was hypothesised that the issue of getting pupils to talk might be related to the type of activities available in the FL classroom and, consequently, to the conceptualization of oral proficiency, which seems to focus more on linguistic competence (e.g., accurate use of vocabulary and grammar) than on the pupils' communicative skills. In other words, the emphasis on language display during FL oral activities shows a concern for lexical and grammatical accuracy rather than a focus on communicative language use. To address these matters, the project team aimed to design oral tasks that might elicit co-constructed interaction and to analyze the communicative interactional skills displayed by the pupils during task accomplishment. The project thus aimed to answer the following research questions: (1) How can we design classroom tasks that elicit oral interaction in the target language?; and (2) What are the interactional features of pupils' task-based interactions? (see also Berggren et al., 2023). The project was thus articulated in two phases: a first phase focusing on the design and classroom implementation of oral tasks, which included the recording of the task-based interactions of consenting pupils, and a second phase focusing on the analysis of the pupils' interactions with a conversation analytic lens, which is particularly suited to identify and describe interactional competence. In what follows, we discuss relevant constructs such as tasks and IC, we describe the study design and the analytical methods adopted, and finally, we share the findings of the two project phases.

Theoretical background

Our project relied on the literature on task-based language teaching (TBLT) for the definition of task, which is central to the first phase of the project. The construct of IC, on the other hand, was crucial in the second phase. Both constructs are illustrated in this section.

Tasks

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is "an approach to course design, implementation, and evaluation intended to meet the communicative needs of

diverse groups of learners" (Long, 2014, p. 5). Specifically, TBLT aims to identify what learners need to be able to do with the target language and to support the practice and development of such skills. One could thus argue that TBLT adopts a view of language-as-action; that is, a view of language as a tool that is used to act in the world. As will be shown below, this pragmatic perspective is highly compatible with CA's view of language and interaction.

While there are various definitions of what a task entails (e.g., see Ellis, 2003; Long, 2014; Nunan, 2004), there seems to be general agreement on the fact that a language learning task consists of an activity where any of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) is used to achieve a communicative outcome. Central to the definition of task is thus the emphasis on the use of the target language for communicative purposes, with a clear focus on meaning rather than form. Furthermore, tasks are understood to involve "real-world processes of language use" (Ellis 2003, p. 10); that is, tasks are entirely different from language exercises and activities that aim for "form-focused language use" (Ellis, 2003, p. 3).

Particularly important, for present purposes, is the list of task design features created by Ellis (2003, p. 21), which was central to the first phase of our project. These features include: the task goal; the task input (instructions and other relevant artifacts such as images or text); the task conditions (e.g., whether the information received through the input is shared or not among the students); the task procedures (e.g., whether the task is performed in groups or pairs, with or without planning time); and the task predicted outcomes.

Interactional competence

In our work, we have chosen to consider oral proficiency from the perspective of IC, a construct developed by researchers in conversation analysis (CA; see the seminal work by Pekarek Doehler, for example in Pekarek Doehler, 2018). IC is grounded in an action-based view of language; that is, the idea that we use language to accomplish social actions, such as greeting someone, asking information-seeking questions, rejecting an offer, etcetera, in situated communicative contexts. Being interactionally competent in a language entails the ability to accomplish recognizable social actions in a socially accountable way. To introduce this idea, let us focus on Excerpt 1 (from Pomerantz, 1978, p. 86) below.

Excerpt 1

```
01 JOHN you wanna sandwich?
02 DAVE no thanks.
03      I ate before I left.
```

A first reading of this short excerpt might suggest that John and Dave are engaging in a question-answer sequence, with John asking a question in line 01 and Dave responding in line 02. However, line 01 does more than asking a question; that is, with that turn, John offers a sandwich to Dave, who rejects the offer while also expressing appreciation for it in line 02. Dave then accounts (i.e., provides a reason) for his rejection in line 03.

A more complex example is presented in Excerpt 2 (reproduced in Levinson, 2013, p. 115 and here slightly modified). The excerpt is extracted from a phone conversation.

Excerpt 2

```
01 CARL hello.
02      I was just ringing up to see
03      if you were going to Bertrand's party.
04 ROB  yes. I thought you might be.
05 CARL heh heh
06 ROB  yes. would you like a lift?
07 CARL oh I'd love one.
```

After greeting Rob (line 01), Carl provides a reason for the call (lines 02-03), namely checking whether Rob is going to Bertrand's party. Note that the answer to this (apparently innocent) information-seeking action is provided in line 06, with Rob confirming that he is going to the same party and offering Carl a ride, which is promptly accepted (line 07). What happens in lines 04-05 shows that Rob had actually understood Carl's turn in lines 02-03 as a pre-request, an interpretation that is confirmed by Carl's laughter in line 05. So, Excerpt 2 shows how a pre-request is ultimately responded to with an offer, which acts as a pre-emptive response (Schegloff, 2007). That is, Rob's offer in line 06 pre-empts Carl from issuing a request (see below).

The examples discussed so far focus on offer sequences, at the core of which there is a turn accomplishing an offer (line 01, Excerpt 1 and line 06, Excerpt 2), followed by a turn providing a response (rejection in line 02, Excerpt 1 and acceptance in line 07, Excerpt 2). The core offer sequence just described constitutes a type of minimal sequence of paired actions (also called adjacency pairs; see Schegloff, 2007). A minimal sequence includes a first action (here the offer), which makes relevant a response, and a second action (here the rejection in Excerpt 1 and the acceptance in Excerpt 2), which provides the response. There are many types of adjacency pairs, where the first parts accomplish a variety of actions such as: invitations, requests, compliments, assessments, information-seeking, etcetera. These minimal sequences are the building blocks of interaction. This means that an interactionally competent language user is able to participate in these

exchanges by formulating either first or responding actions in a recognizable and socially accountable way. The latter aspect is also manifest in the examples above. Specifically, Excerpt 1 shows that rejecting an offer is an action that typically requires more than a simple "no" and is thus accompanied by appreciations and accounts. On the other hand, Excerpt 2 shows that requests are often oriented to as somewhat delicate actions that can be pre-empted with offers; Excerpt 2 also shows that accepting an offer can be done straightforwardly, as it is an action that aligns with the interactional project of the first action and moves it forward.

The idea of action-based language use applies to classroom interactions as well, though teachers and students may accomplish rather specialized actions in the institutional setting of the classroom. Let us consider a made-up example (from Lee, 2007, p. 1205), reproduced as Excerpt 3 below.

Excerpt 3

```
01 A what time is it, Denise?
02 B two thirty.
```

Without any further contextualization, this excerpt can be taken to reproduce a minimal sequence of question (line 01) and answer (line 02). In interactions of this kind, the participant who issued the information-seeking question usually acknowledges the answer with a third turn. However, as Table 1 shows, the third turn can accomplish rather different actions depending on the type of question and on the role that the participants may have. That is, in Excerpt 3a, the third turn produces an assessment of the answer ("very good, Denise"). From this action we understand that speaker A is a teacher and that the question in line 01 was a known-answer question (or display question; see Lee, 2006) meant to assess the student's (i.e., speaker B's) ability to say the time in English.

Excerpt 3a	Excerpt 3b
01 A what time is it, Denise?	01 A what time is it, Denise?
02 B two thirty.	02 B two thirty.
03 A very good, Denise.	03 A thank you, Denise.

Table 1: Third turn: classroom interaction versus ordinary conversation

In Excerpt 3b, on the other hand, the third turn accomplishes an appreciation for the information received ("thank you, Denise"). We thus understand that the question here was a genuine request for information called referential

question (Lee, 2006). If we were to envision a setting where these interactions might take place, then we would say that Excerpt 3b might occur in ordinary conversation when one participant does not have access to the time, while Excerpt 3a might occur in the language classroom. What is interesting in these excerpts is that, while the linguistic formulation of the turns (or turn composition) in line 01 is exactly the same, the two turns accomplish two very different actions; for us as analysts, such difference becomes clear only in relation to the action accomplished by the third turn. This observation is important because it shows that the action accomplished by a turn is not exclusively determined by the linguistic resources (including lexical items and grammar structures) that compose the turn. That is to say, the ability to accomplish recognizable social actions and to respond to such actions in a pragmatically appropriate way does not rest exclusively on the mastery of verbal resources (see Betz & Huth, 2014).

This brings us to a rather crucial consideration: from an IC perspective, linguistic resources (such as grammar and vocabulary) are at the service of communication. In other words, having a rich and diverse linguistic repertoire allows L2 speakers to communicate in a context-sensitive and recipient-designed way, as it allows them to choose – from their linguistic toolkit – the resources that are particularly suited for a specific interlocutor in a specific situation. An important implication, which has been proven through various empirical studies (e.g., Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2015; Pekarek Doehler, Wagner, & González-Martínez, 2018), is that IC development and linguistic development (here understood as the increasing diversification of linguistic resources) go together. For example, Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger (2011) conducted a cross-sectional study in which they explored the practices for managing disagreement deployed by speakers at different levels of schooling and proficiency in French. The authors found that lower-intermediate students (enrolled in lower-secondary school) typically display their disagreement with prior talk through polarity markers (e.g., *non*; English 'no') that are delivered at the beginning of a turn. The positioning of the disagreement, the minimal linguistic formatting, and the lack of hedges and other elaborations (e.g., explanations, etc.) make these turns instances of aggravated disagreement. On the other hand, advanced students (enrolled in upper-secondary school) use a greater range of methods to package disagreeing turns, with turn-initial *non* (English 'no'), but also with the *oui mais…* ('yes but') format. Moreover, the disagreeing turns are designed with hesitation tokens, hedges, and post-disagreement elaborations. Clearly, the diversification of methods to express disagreement is reflected in the parallel development of linguistic resources. That is, expressing disagreements in a mitigated way (like more advanced speakers do) requires the use of a greater variety of linguistic resources that go well beyond a straightforward *non* ('no').

Another aspect that ties together IC and linguistic proficiency is turn-taking, which refers to the ability to produce timely turns that fit with prior talk. Specifically, in order to participate in interaction, one needs to parse the current speaker's turn-in-progress in order to identify a transition relevance place (TRP; e.g., see Clayman, 2013); that is, a place when change of speakership might occur and another participant might take the floor. The identification of a TRP relies on the ability to understand whether the turn-in-progress is syntactically and pragmatically complete; that is, a prospective next speaker needs to monitor closely the current speaker's turn to see whether the linguistic formulation of the turn is (nearly) complete and whether the action accomplished by that turn is recognizable. At the same time, the prospective speaker who eventually manages to take the floor needs to display the relevance of their new turn in relation to prior talk. Clearly, then, the development of turn-taking skills is linked to the development of L2 grammar and vocabulary, which are needed in order to understand the linguistic formulation of the turn and therefore determine when to take the floor and what to say. A study by Cekaite (2007), for example, shows how a young girl engaged in multiparty interaction in a Swedish primary school initially self-selects as next speaker in a disruptive way, with heavy attention-getting devices (e.g., imperatives, high volume). Over a year, she learns to time the delivery of her turns in an appropriate way, while showing their relevance to ongoing talk.

Methodology

This section focuses on the study design adopted in the project and on the CA analysis that was conducted on the pupils' task-based interactions. As mentioned above, in order to answer the first research question, the first phase of the project engaged the research team in iterative cycles of task design, classroom implementation, and revision (for a more detailed description, see Berggren et al., 2019 and Berggren et al., 2023; for examples of specific tasks see Beslagic, Pålsson Gröndahl, & Rosa, 2020 and our project website: https://sites.google.com/view/franmonologertilldialoger/). Our starting point was the framework for task description elaborated by Ellis (2003, p. 21), with its list of essential features for task design (mentioned in the section above); this framework formed the basis for the design, analysis and revision of tasks in our project. Over 6 years, 12 subprojects (6 subprojects in English and 6 subprojects in MLs) were conducted in primary and secondary schools in Sweden, with each subproject focusing on one task; in total, 6 researchers and 30 schoolteachers were involved. In each instance of classroom implementation, all pupils who were present in the classroom completed the target task, but only the consenting pupils were video-recorded, as per the guidelines issued by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017).

Words-only transcripts of the recordings were transcribed and analyzed by the research team who then decided on the necessary revisions for the next task implementation. At this stage, the analysis was conducted through an empirically developed scheme that focused on observed aspects of pupils' interaction, such as: introducing a new idea, developing ideas, agreeing, disagreeing, talking about the instructions, and searching for words (Berggren et al., 2023, p. 17). After various cycles of design, classroom implementation, and revision it was determined that open-ended problem-based tasks elicited the type of co-constructed interaction that the research team aimed for.

The second phase of the project focused on the interactional features of the pupils' task-based interactions (see the second research question) as they accomplished the open-ended problem-based tasks that were deemed to elicit the expected type of interaction in the first phase of the project. This entailed the analysis of data from 3 of the subprojects in the last cycles. As mentioned above, in this phase of the project, CA-informed analyses were developed. CA in fact affords a detailed analysis of talk-in-interaction (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013) and is in line with our interest for the pupils' IC. CA analyzes naturally occurring interactions that are audio- or video-recorded and later transcribed to a high level of detail (see the conventions created by Jefferson, 2004). CA analyses aim to account for how participants in interaction make sense of the social actions they accomplish through their turns-at-talk. CA analyses have 3 main foci: the action accomplished by each turn, the composition of the turn, and the position of the turn in relation to the unfolding interaction. Furthermore, CA analyses consider the interactional mechanisms that are observable in interaction, such as turn-taking, sequence organization, and repair (i.e., a mechanism used to solve problems of hearing, speaking, and understanding that may arise in interaction). In this phase of the project, the research team viewed the selected recordings multiple times and then produced detailed transcripts of representative examples (for a list of convention symbols, see the appendix). For ethical reasons, all the names appearing in the excerpts reproduced below are pseudonyms. When languages other than English have been used, an idiomatic translation has been provided in the line below the original turn; the translations are meant to reflect inaccuracies in the original language. The next section will report on the results of the two project phases.

Results from the first phase: A blueprint for open-ended problem-based tasks

As mentioned above, in the first phase of our project, the research team found that open-ended problem-based tasks engage pupils in the co-construction of

possible solutions to the problem. This finding led to concrete and actionable outcomes, involving a blueprint for the design of open-ended problem-based tasks which elicit co-constructed interaction (Table 2), as well as a number of oral tasks (all tested in the classroom) to be used in FL teaching. More information about the blueprint as well as a selection of tasks from the subprojects are available on the project website (https://sites.google.com/view/franmonologertilldialoger).

	Design feature	Description
1	Goal	Engage the pupils in oral co-constructed interaction while unraveling a problem by forming hypotheses
2	Input	Short written introduction of problem Artifacts (actual items or paper cutouts)
3	Conditions	Shared information (one set per group) Reasoning-gap task Converging use of information in an open task
4	Procedures	2-3 pupils No planning time
5	Ending	An action that signals task completion
6	Process	"Good interaction"

Table 2: Blueprint for open-ended problem-based tasks (Berggren et al., 2023, p. 22)

This blueprint is based on an adapted version of Ellis' design features (2003). The task problem to solve is introduced through the task input consisting of short written backgrounds and a set of cutout pictures or material objects. Moreover, the blueprint indicates that the task needs to have a clear ending. Furthermore, tasks based on this blueprint aim to engage pupils in the process of "good" (i.e., co-constructed) interaction. This process is described and exemplified in the next section.

Results from the second phase: Pupils' task-based interaction

In what follows, we report on the findings from the second phase of the project, when CA-informed analyses were conducted in order to identify and describe the pupils' interactional skills as they accomplished open-ended problem-based tasks. To illustrate our findings, we provide two examples of task-based interactions accomplished by pairs of students in English (Excerpt 4) and Spanish (Excerpt 5).

Excerpt 4 reproduces part of the interaction between two students (pseudonyms: Sam and Frida) in the first year of upper secondary school (Swedish gymnasium), as they engage in the *Excavation* task. The input for this task includes an instructions card and cutout pictures of various items (including a kiwi, a boomerang, and a compass). The instructions card presents a problem set in this scenario: "At an excavation of a cave, a person was found with these items. How did the person end up in the cave?". After discussing various possibilities, Sam starts summarizing his solution to the problem: the person found in the cave is "an adventurous man" (lines 01-02) who was "planning to do an adventure" (lines 11 and 13). For this reason, he had brought a compass (line 13).

Excerpt 4 – *Excavation* task (1ˢᵗ year upper secondary school)

```
01 SAM    °°alright.°° so my- my:: solution i̲s̲: (0.3)
02        he's a/n/dventurous man,
03 FRIDA yeah.
04        (0.4)
05 FRIDA [with a kiwi,]
06 SAM   [he was     ]
07 SAM   hhh wi(h)th a(h) ki(h)wi(h),
08 FRIDA hh yeah.
09 SAM   [he was- ]
10 FRIDA [and a wo]rm.=
11 SAM   =no. (orm.) he was planning to[:::::::     ]=
12 FRIDA                               [>or a carrot.<]
13 SAM   =e:::h (0.2) do an adventure that's why he has a compass
14       because (0.4) it's not a regular day
15       when you have [a compass on you.]
16 FRIDA               [no:. you don't.  ]
17       if you go ou̲ts̲ide you don't bring *a compass.
   frida                                  *touches compass card
18 SAM   >yeah.< exactly.
19       >so he- he was< planning some̲thi̲ng adventu[rous,]
20 FRIDA                                           [and  ]
21       he had never be̲en̲ the̲r̲e I think.
```

Let us consider how this interaction unfolds in more detail. In line 03, Frida says "yeah"; with this turn, she displays that she has been attentive enough to acknowledge Sam's solution. After a 0.4 second pause (line 04), both Frida and Sam start talking at the same time. This means that they have both been monitoring the ongoing interaction and have identified this instant as a moment when either of them can take the floor. Specifically, Sam starts proposing the idea that the man was planning an adventure (see lines 06, 09, and 11), though for the moment he just says "he was" (line 06). At the same time, Frida adds the increment "with a kiwi" (line 05); as a result of her action, the turn originally produced by Sam now sounds like: "he's an adventurous man with a kiwi". Sam repeats "with a kiwi" with laughter tokens (line 07), thereby indicating that: (a) he has heard what Frida said in line 05 despite

being in overlap with her (which attests to Sam's linguistic ability), and (b) he is treating her increment to his turn as non-serious; that is, something that can be laughed about. Note that, with her increment, Frida could have also been heard as challenging Sam's characterization of the man as adventurous. However, Sam's reaction does not orient to a potential challenge. Frida then adds further increments: "and a worm" (line 10) "or a carrot" (line 12); these increments actually target their previous discussion over the boomerang card, which they had initially interpreted as illustrating a worm or a carrot. After rejecting Frida's addition of a worm accompanying the man (line 11), Sam continues with his characterization of the man as adventurous by producing an account: if someone has a compass (lines 13 and 15), "it's not a regular day" (line 14). At this point, Frida aligns with Sam (line 16) and reformulates Sam's reasoning in a way that shows her agreement (line 17); in so doing, she also touches the compass as a way to clarify which card she is referring to. Finally, Sam confirms the line of reasoning (line 18) and concludes that "he was planning something adventurous" (line 19), while Frida adds: "and he had never been there I think" (lines 20-21). This turn, which strengthens Sam's argument about the role of the compass, starts in overlap with Sam's prior turn (19); however, it starts at a point where Sam's turn could be projected (i.e., anticipated) as complete. Therefore, Frida's turn is not interruptive; on the contrary, it shows her ability to monitor Sam's turn and to anticipate when he might be done.

Overall, we can say that, in Excerpt 4, Sam and Frida have relied on and demonstrated their IC in English, because they have produced recognizable social actions, such as: proposing a solution to the task problem, joking about it, accounting for it, and ultimately agreeing on it with converging arguments. In doing so, they have also closely followed each other's talk and managed to produce timely and fitting turns that displayed their attentive listenership. This example of task-based interaction has therefore illustrated the affordances of the open-ended problem-based task implemented by these pupils for communicative practice. Put another way, our analysis has shown that the type of task input (with the instructions and the cutout pictures) provided in the *Excavation* task elicited co-constructed interaction, thereby giving pupils an opportunity to practice their IC and to foster their "all-round communicative ability" (Skolverket, 2024, p. 43). In this regard, we should also mention that, in our work on this dataset (see also Kunitz et al., 2022), we have noticed how the material nature of the task input (presented on laminated cards) has had an impact on the pupils' interaction; specifically, the pupils manipulated the relevant cards with embodied actions (such as pointing, tapping, touching, etc.) that often choreographed their talk and served the purpose of establishing a shared focus of attention and cooperative action (Goodwin, 2013) and of fostering shared understanding, while also emphasizing specific referents. Overall, then, the pupils in English used the interplay of resources at their

disposal, both linguistic (occasionally including Swedish as well) and embodied, to complete the assigned tasks.

This interplay of semiotic resources is even more apparent in the data collected in the ML classroom, where embodiment emerged as a crucial resource for task accomplishment, as shown in Excerpt 5 below. A common concern when designing tasks for ML pupils is their limited linguistic proficiency; that is, ML teachers often worry that their pupils might not be able to complete a communicative task because they are not proficient enough in the target language. What the following excerpt will show is that ML pupils may also accomplish open-ended problem-based tasks if they are allowed to resort to all the semiotic resources in their repertoire. This finding is illustrated in Excerpt 5, which reproduces part of the interaction between two pupils (pseudonyms: Anna and Olle) working with the *Zoo* task. In this task, the pupils take on the role of a zoo manager who needs to assign a color to each cage, in order to make the zoo more colorful and fun. The pupils have a map of the zoo and the cages, on which they place cutout pictures of animals and colored pieces of paper to indicate their joint decisions. Excerpt 5 shows Anna proposing that the giraffe (line 02) will be placed in the yellow cage (lines 03-04) and Olle following Anna's proposal (lines 02-04) and finally agreeing with it (line 05). The excerpt illustrates the interplay of semiotic resources that the pupils use to accomplish the task. These resources include: the first language (Swedish), the target language (Spanish), and embodiment.

Excerpt 5 – *Zoo* task (year 6)

```
01 ANNA +e::::hm (0.6) vi kanske ska säga typ färgerna.
                       maybe we should say like the colors
      anna +holding giraffe card

02       +.hh *e:::hm (0.3) jirafa,
                            giraffe
      anna +lifts up giraffe card and points at it
      olle      *gazes at Anna

03       +*(.) m:::::::*::::h
      anna +points at yellow card on zoo map
      olle  *gazes at Anna's hand
                      *raises eyebrows and opens eyes wide

04       +ama*rilo!
           yelow
      anna +places giraffe card on yellow card
      olle     *points at Anna's hand

05       (0.7) *(0.8)           *+(0.4)
      olle       *nods and claps *claps
      anna                       +taps on her right temple

06 ANNA +HE HE applåder!
                applause
      anna +claps
```

Specifically, in line 01 Anna uses Swedish to propose how they should go about solving the task problem ('maybe we should say like colors'), as she is holding the giraffe card. In line 02 she lifts up the same card and uses Spanish to mention the animal ("jirafa"; English, 'giraffe'); her turn attracts Olle's attention as he now looks at her. In line 03 Anna points at the yellow card on the board game while she produces an elongated *mh* (possibly a holder for a vocabulary item in Spanish connecting the word for 'giraffe' with the word for 'yellow', mentioned below, in line 04). Olle follows the movement of Anna's hand and eventually raises his eyebrows and opens his eyes wide. In line 04, Anna produces the name of the color in Spanish (the Spanish word is *amarillo*, here pronounced as "amarilo"; English 'yellow') as she places the giraffe card on the yellow card; Olle points at Anna's hand while she is pointing at the yellow card. Overall, lines 02-04 show that Anna is using the resources at her disposal to propose that the giraffe's cage should be yellow, while Olle displays his attentive listenership through embodied actions. Olle finally accepts Anna's proposal, as indicated by his nodding and clapping (line 05). Anna then points at her right temple and taps on it, with a gesture that seems to communicate that she had a good idea; she then laughs and starts clapping too while saying 'applause!' in Swedish (line 06). In the last lines,

then, agreement is reached through embodiment and success is marked with laughter. While in Excerpt 5 it is apparent that the pupils' linguistic proficiency in Spanish is limited, nevertheless these pupils did manage to complete the task with the resources at their disposal. Their IC emerged in their ability to laminate (Goodwin, 2013) their resources in an orderly and systematic fashion, while very much co-constructing the interaction.

Discussion

The present chapter has reported the findings of a collaborative research project that had set out to solve a practice-based problem, namely how to get pupils to engage in collaborative interaction in the FL classroom. Specifically, the research team has confirmed its initial hypothesis that the problem might actually lie in the type of oral activities implemented in the classroom and has found that open-ended problem-based tasks seem to be effective in eliciting co-constructed interaction. Furthermore, the pupils' task-based interactions have been analyzed with a CA lens that has allowed the research team to identify aspects of the pupils' IC, such as the ability of listening to one another, proposing solutions, agreeing, and disagreeing, while using a range of semiotic resources which were skilfully laminated to achieve meaningful communicative outcomes.

Overall, these findings are in line with the Swedish syllabus, which emphasizes the importance of developing the pupils' "all-round communicative ability" (Skolverket, 2024, p. 43) in the target language. To achieve this goal, pupils need ample opportunities to make meaningful, purposeful, and communicative use of the target language. In this chapter, we have seen how such opportunities can be offered through the implementation of oral tasks where the focus is on language use rather than language display, and where success is measured in terms of task completion. We, thus, argue that the process of teaching communicative skills starts with task design.

At the same time, to reflect the emphasis on the pupils' communicative skills set forth in policy documents, it seems crucial to adopt a view of oral proficiency in general and of interactional skills in particular that focuses on language use and that goes beyond the criterion of linguistic accuracy. The construct of IC seems well suited for this purpose. IC provides tools for conceptualizing pupil's free oral interaction in terms of social actions, while also acknowledging the semiotic resources that can be employed to accomplish those actions in a recognizable, appropriate, and socially accountable way.

As the analysis has shown, an essential component of IC lies in the ability to take the floor in a timely and fitting way. Taking the floor rests on the linguistic ability of parsing the ongoing turn produced by the coparticipant, in order to identify a TRP. It is, therefore, also important that pupils are given

the opportunity to practice turn-taking freely. In teacher-pupil interaction, for example, turn allocation is often regulated by the teacher, who nominates a specific pupil as the next-turn speaker or at least indicates when it is time for the pupils to take the floor. In this situation, the ability to monitor the coparticipant's turn to bid for and eventually take the floor is therefore not practiced. However, the tasks that we have presented here clearly offer this opportunity, as the pupils interact with one another in a more spontaneous way and experience the mechanism of turn-taking as it is usually implemented in ordinary conversation. As mentioned before, a focus on IC does not imply disregarding the linguistic and other semiotic resources that are needed to interact with others. On the contrary, looking at pupils' oral production with an IC lens allows us to value what they can do with the resources at their disposal, while also identifying resources that need to become more diversified in order for pupils to produce more context-sensitive and recipient-designed actions. This is to say that we are not advocating for the exclusive use of communicative tasks with a focus on meaning. As research within the communicative language teaching approach has emphasized (see Ellis, 2014), pupils do need to engage in focus on form activities as much as they need to focus on meaningful communication. What is required is a balance, so that pupils are provided with the opportunity to engage in both form-focused and meaning-focused activities, with different goals and different criteria of success, so that their proficiency in a FL is not measured exclusively in terms of their accurate use of linguistic resources but also in terms of the accomplishment of communicative goals. Ultimately, this dual goal of FL teaching and learning reflects the reality of how languages are used in the world.

For hands-on activities and materials for teachers interested in IC and task design, please visit our website:
https://sites.google.com/view/franmonologertilldialoger/

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Transcription conventions (based on Jefferson, 2004)

? / ¿ / , / .	Rising/slightly rising/low-rising/falling intonation
!	Strong emphasis with falling intonation
°word°	Lower, softer volume
WORD	Louder volume
word	Marked stress
wo::rd	Lengthening of the preceding sound
wo-	Cut-off word
<word>	Slower pace
>word<	Faster pace
hh	Laughter
(h)	Laughter within a word
[ ]	Overlapping talk by two speakers
=	Latched utterances (no gap between two turns)
(.)	A pause of one beat
(0.3)	A pause of 0.3 second
(1.0)	A pause of one second
*/+	Marking the co-occurrence of embodied actions with talk (or silence)