

Watch out, there are Swedes in the hallway!

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Whenever I go to IKEA Seattle, I try to speak Swedish with the people who work there, but it never works.

Yesterday, I was heading to a colleague's office to drop off Symphony tickets. (A group of friends wanted tickets together, so the order was placed in my name, and I needed to distribute them to the people in the group.) As I neared his office, I noticed a crowd of people outside and realized that they were speaking Swedish. I tried to follow what they were saying, but of course since they were speaking among themselves, they weren't taking very much effort to enunciate clearly enough for a beginner to follow.

The solution, therefore, is to change the subject.

I said hello and told them I had been studying Swedish for two years. One of them asked me a question that I couldn't understand, so I apologized for my bad Swedish, but they insisted it was "jättebra" (great). How they could conclude that from one misunderstood question I'm not sure. They asked me simpler questions like whether I had ever lived in Sweden (no), and why I started studying it in the first place.

After a brief chat, I excused myself to deliver the tickets. Afterwards, I realized that I forgot to ask them whether they were Microsoft employees or whether they were visiting (and if visiting, from what company).

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