

Word Up!

Boosting L2 learners' vocabulary through researcher-teacher collaboration: opportunities and obstacles

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Background and Focus

The project *Word Up!* is partly inspired by Sato and Loewen's (2018) study on the research-pedagogy dialogue in EFL teaching. Interviews with L2 teachers revealed that research was perceived as useful and relevant for them but that, instead of reading research articles on their own, they wanted as one participant put it to "create a community of practice where teachers and researchers solve educational issues together" (p. 7).

In *Word Up!* we approach the research-pedagogy dialogue by focusing on how some of the available L2 vocabulary research can be made accessible to L2 teachers and implemented in their classroom practices. To aid the process of evaluating research, we propose a model for said dialogue of six sequential phases outlined in the figure below. The model draws on general frameworks of professional development proposed by, for instance Timperley (2008), and heeds Marsden and Kasproicz's (2017) conclusion that "research could better find its way into practitioners' communities of practice, for evaluation by them" (p. 632).

Aim

Word Up! aims to explore the research-pedagogy dialogue by orchestrating and reporting on a researcher-teacher collaboration scheme in relation to implementing L2 vocabulary research into L2 classroom practices.



Research methodology

Two research questions guide the investigations of *Word Up!*:

1. How do L2 teachers relate to and include L2 research when planning their lessons?
2. What opportunities and obstacles do L2 teachers report after implementing L2 research into their classrooms practices?

Study participants are teams of L2 teachers of English and Modern Languages from Sweden and Belgium at the lower secondary level with pupils aged 10-16. Verbal data are collected in the pre-instructional and post-instructional phases for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).



Instructed L2 learning in action. Photo: Eva Dalin

The six phases of Word Up!

Observation: We observe what the teachers do with regards to boosting their learners' vocabulary when introducing a new text.

Inventory: Based on the observations, we make an inventory of relevant theory and empirical research from L2 research and present it to the teachers.

Application: Same-subject teachers discuss in pairs how to apply the inventory in their classrooms; these pre-instructional discussions are audio-recorded.

Implementation: The teachers implement their lessons and we collect observation data.

Evaluation: The pairs discuss opportunities and obstacles of the implementations; these post-instructional discussions are audio-recorded, and we evaluate the outcomes of the implementations based on observations.

Dissemination: We plan to write up the study for publication and for the teachers to present the study at L2 teacher conferences and at other schools.

References

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