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Finnish L2 proficiency for working life: towards research-based language education and supervision practices

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Abstract

In all Nordic countries, the L2 proficiency needed at work has become a key area in the language education provided for adult immigrants. This paper is part of a series of articles that gives an overview of language policies and research activities in the Nordic countries related to L2 in working life, together with a presentation of novel empirical analyses. Here, the focus is on the Finnish perspective. The aims of this paper are twofold. First, it provides an overall picture of the policies and research findings underlying recent tendencies in Finnish L2 language education in/for working life. After this, the article presents two case studies of clinical supervision practices in health care. These studies illustrate how using detailed analysis to capture certain features of workplace interaction in L2 can promote pedagogical development work. The first study explores, in an ecological framework, the intersection of the requirements and the evaluation of international nursing students' performance during their practical training. The focus is on the narratives of clinical supervisors and head nurses. The second study uses conversation analysis to investigate language learning opportunities in authentic supervision encounters. The findings highlight the need for language-aware supervision practices and closer collaboration between education providers and work placements. Finally, the paper discusses pedagogical implications of the case studies and other research on Finnish L2 in/for work. Some future prospects for work-related L2 studies and research-based pedagogical development are also outlined.

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