



# Debate as a Pedagogical Tool in EFL Classrooms: A Case Study from Belgium

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2 avril – Louvain-la-Neuve

# Presentation Structure

- Why study debate?
- General research hypothesis
- Methodology
- Results
- Future perspectives

# Why Study Debate?

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Rich textual genre

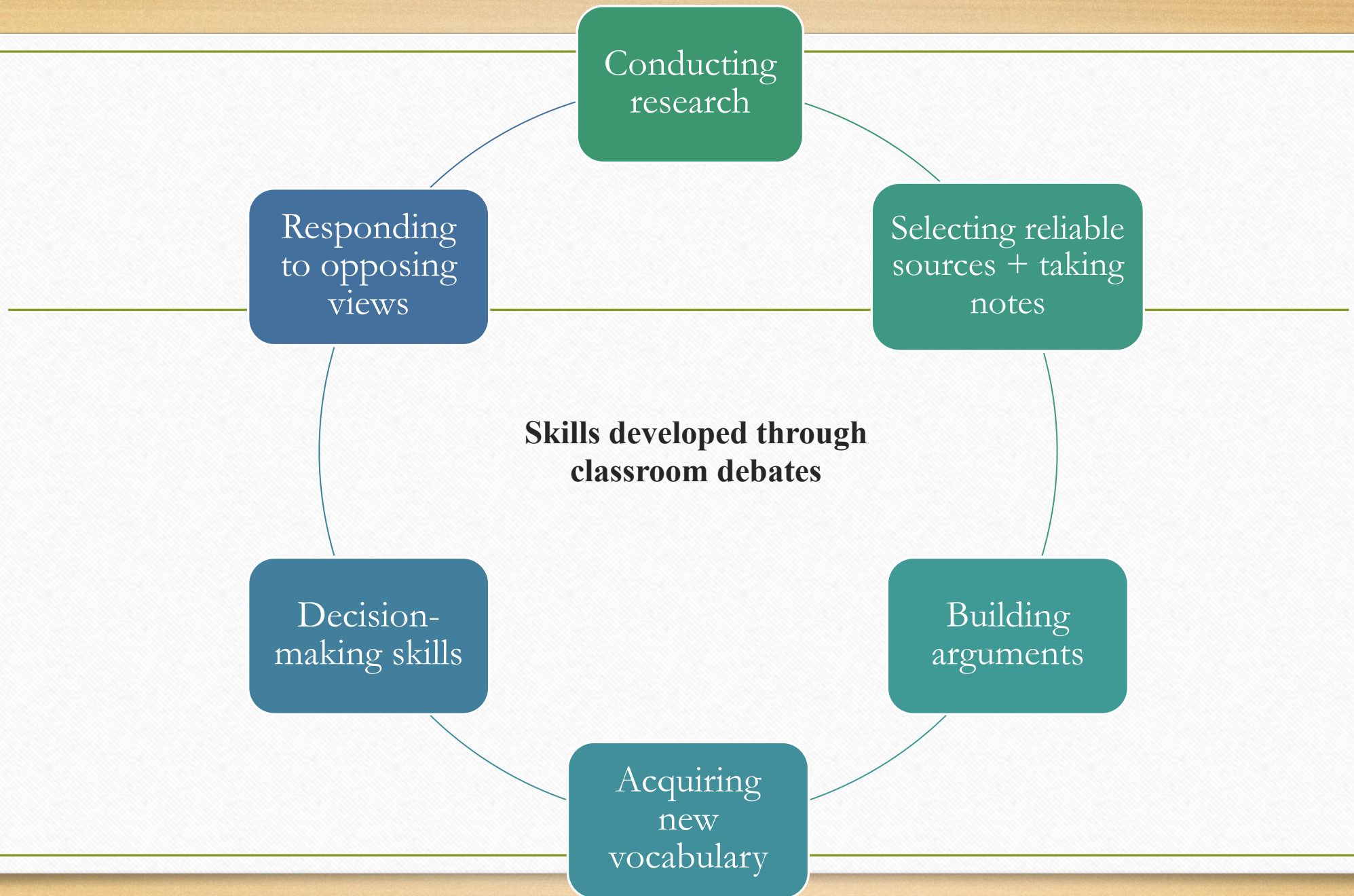
Development of argumentation skills

Promotion of active listening and tolerance

Omnipresent in our society

Authentic task





# Why Study Debate?

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SELF-CONFIDENCE



CRITICAL THINKING



COMMUNICATION  
SKILLS

# Main Research Hypothesis

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graph TD; A[Explicit teaching of textual genres] --> B[adds value for foreign language learning]; A --> C[is more effective than implicit teaching]
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Explicit teaching  
of textual genres

adds value for foreign  
language learning

is more effective than  
implicit teaching

# Methodology

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Literature Review

Analysis of Official  
Guidelines + Interviews  
& Online Survey

Experimental  
teaching



# Literature Review

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Regulated Public Debate



Public Regulated **Social** Debate



*Oxford-style* Debate



# Online Survey

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Declared practices



Investigate the real-life teaching practices



Foreign language teachers in French-speaking Belgium



571 responses

# Online Survey

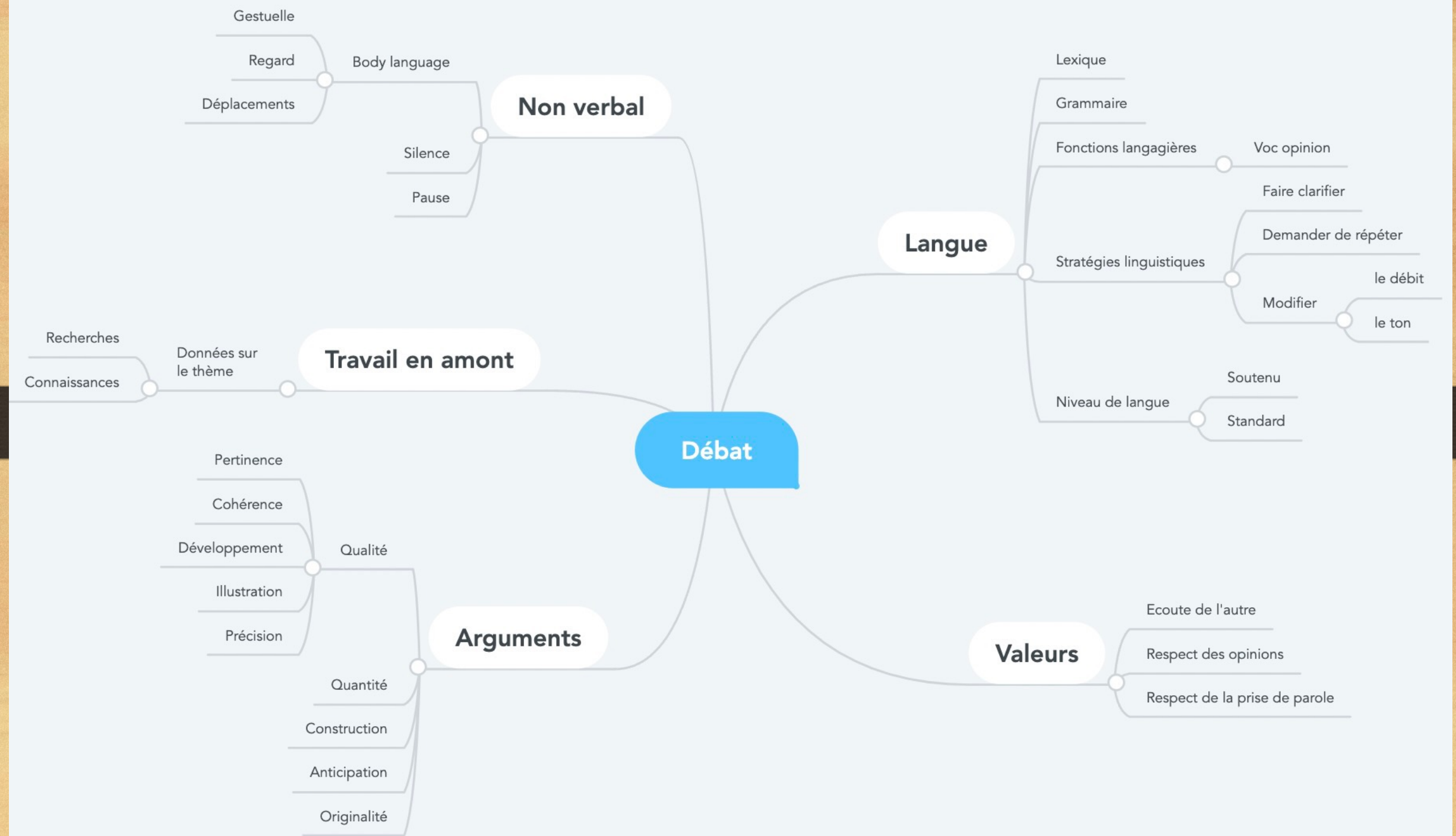
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Debate in the  
FL classroom

Common didactic  
practice

Used as final task

Used as a pretext to  
teach other content





✓ Debate Structure

✓ Building Arguments

✓ Non-Verbal  
Communication

✓ Roles of Participants

✓ Thematic Vocabulary

Experimental  
Teaching Sequence  
on Regulated Public  
Social Debate

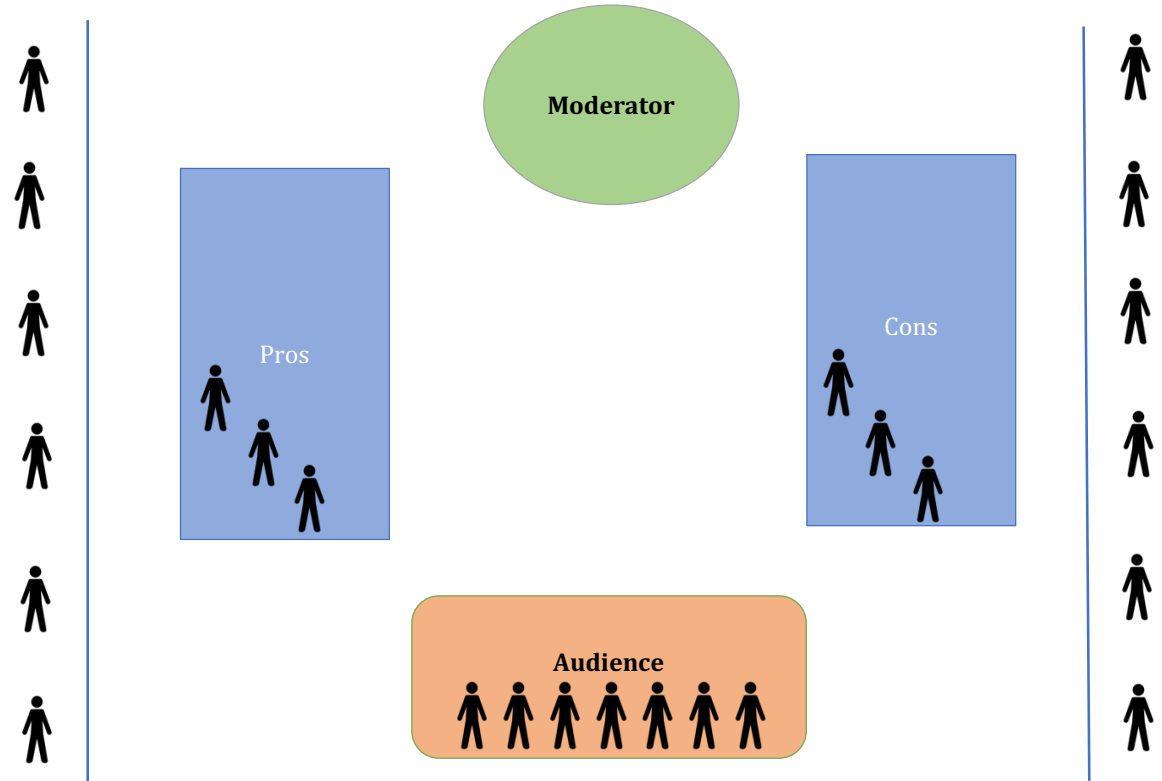
✓ Role of the Moderator

✓ Linguistic Functions &  
Strategies

✓ Rules & Values of Debate

# Didactic Engineering

- 8-Lesson Teaching Sequence
- Theme : *Is Online Learning As Good As Face-To-Face Learning?*
- Use of the *DOOOLE* Technique during debates





# Explicit *vs.* Implicit Approach

## Explicit Approach

Making learning objectives visible

Explicit instruction and guided practice : « *Dire, montrer, guider* » (Gauthier *et al.*, 2013)

Regular comprehension checks

Unconscious learning (Williams, 2009)

Incidental acquisition & automatic reuse (Hulstijn, 2003)

Imitative learning tasks (Williams, 2009)

## Implicit Approach



# Methodology

**5 partner teachers**

Explicit teaching sequence: 3 classes, 50 students

Implicit teaching sequence: 3 classes, 68 students

**Didactic intervention**

**2 to 3 months**

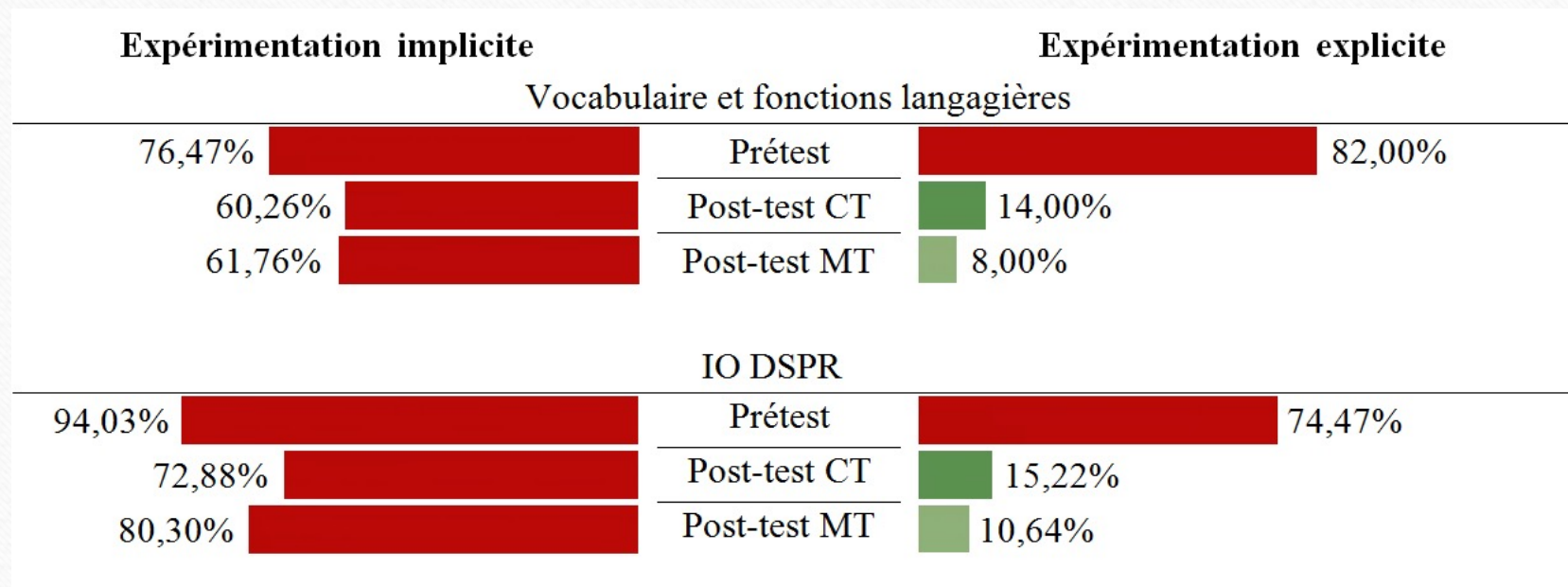
**Pretests**

**Short-Term  
Post-Tests**

**Medium-Term  
Post-Tests**



# Experimental Results



# Drivers of change in teaching practices

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The didactic sequence endured in the practices of the 5 partner teachers

Teachers = knowledge facilitators

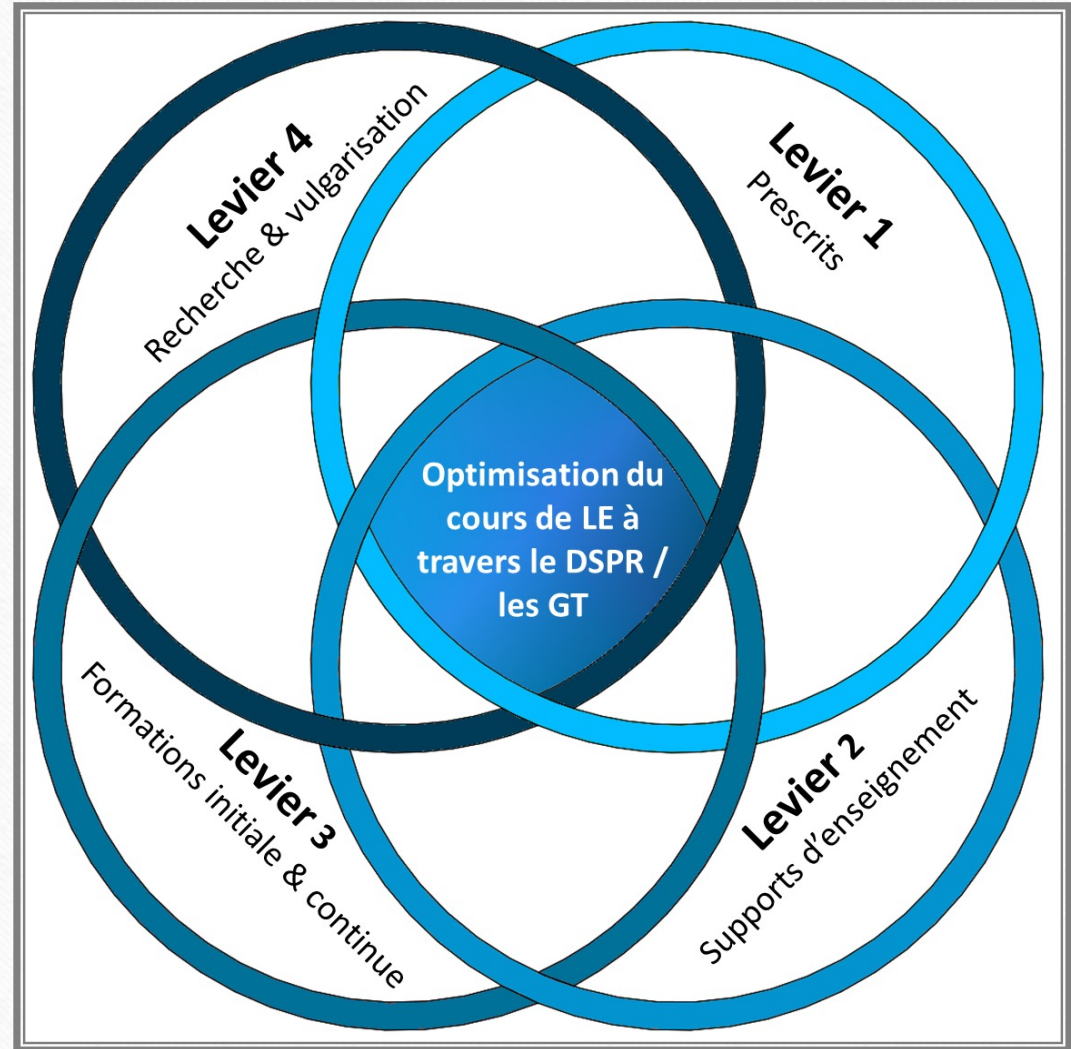
The experimental tools were adapted, making the system flexible rather than fixed

The observation sessions and exchanges with the researcher provided significant added value





# AND NOW?









# Now... let's debate !

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