

Title of Project:

The isolation and integration of form-focused instruction: Views from ESL and EFL teachers and learners

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Project Summary:

Classroom research and teaching experience have led to a growing consensus that instruction is most effective when it includes attention to both form and meaning. The focus of our ongoing research is on when it is most effective to draw learners' attention to language form. Specifically, we are investigating whether it is better to draw learners' attention to language form in lessons that are isolated from communicative or content-based interaction or in activities where form focus is integrated within communicative practice.

In the first phase of our research we collected questionnaire data on preferences for integrated and isolated instruction from 40 teachers and 250 adult learners in two intensive ESL programs in Canada. In addition, 8 of the teachers (4 from each program) taught two versions of an instructional unit on the passive construction: one in an integrated format and the other in an isolated format, to one class in their program. Immediately after the two lessons were taught, learners and teachers completed a feedback questionnaire seeking their opinions about the two instructional approaches. Analyses of the ESL data indicate that teachers and learners value both integrated and isolated form-focused instruction. This was observed in the questionnaire and instructional feedback phases of the research.

In the proposed research we will collect comparison data from approximately the same number of teachers and adult learners in EFL programs in Brazil. We will compare the ESL and EFL databases to determine whether teacher and learner opinions are similar or different in these contexts.

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