

**Dissertation Title:**

The Role of Form-Focused Instruction:  
Learner Investment in L2 Communication

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**Summary:**

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of form-focused instruction in relation to learner investment in second language (L2) communication and learning. Although positive effects of form-focused instruction have been reported in the instructed second language acquisition literature, most of this research has been conducted from a cognitive-interactionist perspective. Little attention has been paid to the social and cultural factors of form-focused instruction, including learner investment—a desire to learn a second/foreign language taking into consideration learners' socially constructed identities (Norton-Peirce, 1995). Drawing on second language socialization theory (Duff, 2007) and using discursive practices (Young, 2009) as an analytic framework, this study examined how form-focused instruction influences learner investment in L2 communication in the classroom setting.

Twenty-four high school students in Japan participated in this study, where two Japanese teachers of English team-taught four 50-minute lessons. Each lesson contained a 30-minute treatment period, which consisted of a 15-minute exclusively meaning-focused (MF) activity and a 15-minute form-focused (FF) activity that included attention to both form and meaning. By counter-balancing effects of tasks, target grammar features, and teachers, the study examined whether and how the same learners invested in L2 communication in similar or different ways during the two different types of activities. Data were collected through classroom observations, video-recorded classroom interactions, stimulated recalls, interviews, questionnaires, and diaries. The interactional data were analyzed quantitatively by comparing the frequency of turns and language-related episodes during FF and MF activities. The same interactional data were also analyzed qualitatively in relation to discursive practices and self-reported data.

The results showed that the FF activities created contexts for learners to establish their identities as L2 learners leading to more engagement in L2 communication than in the MF activities. This suggests that FF activities create a social context that enables learners to communicate in the L2 with greater investment than in MF activities. The results of this study also provide support for the claim that social and cognitive processes complement each other in fostering L2 learning. More research to examine a larger number of participants from a variety of L1 backgrounds, ages, and learning contexts is needed to confirm these findings. It is hoped that future studies will examine L2 learning from social and cognitive perspectives to better understand learners, the learning processes, and the learning situations. Such research will contribute in important ways to the provision of better second language education.

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