The Effect of Focus-on-Form(s) on Intermediate L2 Learners’ Metaphorical Competence Development

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Recent developments in cognitive linguistics have highlighted the importance and the ubiquity of metaphor in language. Their effect has been instrumental in making significant headway into pedagogical practice and the design of teaching materials. This study aimed at exploring the efficacy of focus-on-form(s) instruction on the learning of metaphors by intermediate L2 learners of English. To do so, 80 participants who were homogeneous in terms of language proficiency and metaphoric competence were assigned to 3 groups—2 experimental and 1 control groups. One of the experimental groups was exposed to a 20-session explicit teaching of metaphors (i.e., focus-on-forms) contained in the reading passages. The second group was taught the L2 metaphorical expressions through implicit instruction (i.e., focus-on-form) and was required to guess their meanings. And, the control group did not receive any particular kind of instruction; however, they took the same pretest and posttest as the 2 experimental groups did. To analyze the data, analysis of covariance was utilized. The findings revealed that the explicitly-taught group gained better results on the posttest. Therefore, the results indicated a positive correlation between focus-on-forms instruction and the development of metaphorical competence. It could be claimed that it is possible to enhance L2 learners’ metaphorical competence via the explicit teaching of metaphors.