



THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH RELATIVE CLAUSES BY IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS: THE IMPACT OF PROCESSING INSTRUCTION & MEANINGFUL OUTPUT-BASED INSTRUCTION

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Abstract

Studies on the learning of grammatical points have suggested the effective role of types of instruction. The current study aims at investigating the impact of Processing Instruction (PI), an input-based approach to grammar instruction introduced by Van Patten (1996), and Meaningful Output-based Instruction (MOBI), on the Acquisition of English Relative Clauses. The participants consisted of 60 intermediate Iranian EFL learners in two Treatment groups of (PI) and (MOBI) and one Control group(C). The researchers used a quasi-experimental design with a pretest- treatment-posttest sequence. As for the assessment, a Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJT) was employed, focusing on the sentence level. Experimental groups received the same input and material for the instruction but received meaningful oral and written input or output-based exercises. The relative effects of the two approaches (PI and MOBI) on the linguistic development, i.e. acquisition of relative clauses, of learners were analyzed. Having compared the results of group one and two, PI and MOBI, the researchers found that there is a statistically significant difference between the pretest & posttest of Experimental groups. Processing Instruction had more influence on the correct selection of grammatical sentences in comparison with Meaningful Output-based Instruction. Therefore, we can draw the conclusion that PI can facilitate the acquisition process of English relative clauses. In addition, comparing the results of Control group with that of Experimental groups also confirms the previous findings; besides, the participants of Control group could not outperform those of Experimental groups. However, the experimental groups could do better than the control group.

Key Words: Processing Instruction, Meaningful Output-based Instruction, Comprehension Practice, Production Practice, English Relative Clauses.