

Report

An Exploratory Study of Focus on Form Instruction: How Advanced ESL Writers Attend to Form During Group Work

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Focus on form instruction has been posited as addressing second language forms while simultaneously engaging students in authentic communication. However, for purely practical reasons, teacher-initiated focus on form instruction seems unable to be carried out in the majority of ESL/EFL classrooms. Theoretically, then, student-initiated focus on form instruction seems to be a possible way in which learners' form-based needs can be met in a communicative setting. However, very little research has been done into discovering whether or not learners are willing and/or able to attend to form without requesting help from their teachers. The following study examined whether or not learners in an advanced ESL writing class were able to focus on form independently of the teacher while engaging in group writing activities. The results indicated that they were able to do so and in a variety of ways, such as through negotiating problematic forms and asking direct questions to other learners about language. Such findings suggest that student-generated focus on form is a viable option for addressing L2 forms, especially in classes in which teachers are unable to do so.